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LETTERS OF

THOMAS ERSKINE

OF LINLATHEN

Edinburgh: Printed by Thomas and Archibald Constable,

FOR

DAVID DOUGLAS.

LONDON . . . . . HAMILTON, ADAMS, AND CO.

CAMBRIDGE . . . . . MACMILLAN AND CO.

GLASGOW . . . . . JAMES MACLEHOSE.





Thomas Erskine

of Linlathen

From a bust by Macdonald taken in 1844

Letters of

THOMAS ERSKINE

OF LINLATHEN

FROM 1840 TILL 1870

Edited by

WILLIAM HANNA, D.D.

AUTHOR OF 'MEMOIRS OF DR. CHALMERS,' ETC.

EDINBURGH: DAVID DOUGLAS

1877







PREFACE.

In undertaking to arrange for publication the letters of Mr. Erskine, it was distinctly understood that nothing like a biography was to be attempted. The materials did not exist, or were of such a kind, so difficult to manipulate, that Dr. M'Leod Campbell, Bishop Ewing, and Principal Shairp—of all men the three most competent—when invited to write the Life of their friend, each in turn declined the task. In executing the altogether different office of editing letters, most of which were already in print when put into my hands, there was a difficulty with which a biographer would not have had to contend. The many friends and correspondents had to be thought of, by whom those letters had been supplied, to whom everything that ever fell from Mr. Erskine's pen was precious, and by whom every link that bound them visibly to him would be prized; in gratifying whom it was

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LETTERS OF THOMAS ERSKINE.

CHAPTER I.

Letters from 1840 till 1844.

THE twenty years of Mr. Erskine's life from 1840 to 1860 were in striking contrast with those immediately preceding. From 1828 till 1840 pamphlet after pamphlet, volume after volume, was published; meetings were held, addresses delivered, means of all kinds, public and private, employed for the dissemination of his favourite ideas. On his return from the Continent in 1840 all this was changed. The pulpit of Broughty-Ferry Chapel was never again entered; the servants' hall at Linlathen no longer used for other than strictly domestic purposes; not a single volume from his pen appeared. It was not that his thoughts were less intently occupied with the great truths of Christianity, or that his faith in them had failed; it was not that the ardent desire to have those forms and aspects of these truths in which they presented themselves to his own mind welcomed by others had in any way abated. But it does look as if his experience had satisfied him that it was not in the direction either of controversy or outward activities of any kind that his strength could be best employed—as if

his hopes of influencing thereby the opinion or action of the Churches had collapsed—as if he had lost heart even for the quieter method of speaking through the press. The entire cessation from authorship seems the more remarkable considering the exceptionally favourable circumstances in which he was placed,—in the full maturity of his powers, with no domestic or professional demands upon his time, no political or ecclesiastical entanglements to warp or bias his opinions. He had always indeed a very lowly estimate of his own writings, and of any power over others they might possibly exert, and this may in part have restrained him from publishing. If, however, in consequence of his retirement into private life and abstinence from authorship, the sphere of his influence in one way became narrower, in another it became at once wider and deeper,—the difference indicated by the correspondence of this as compared with that of the preceding volume. Putting aside his friends on the Continent, his letters up till 1840 were addressed to immediate relatives or personal friends. The circle, it is true, was not only a large but a somewhat remarkable one. It may be doubted whether, in the range of Scottish domestic life, there ever was, before or since, in the same class of society, so many fitted by culture to appreciate, and by deep religious faith to sympathise with him, as Mr. Erskine found within the circle of his own cousinhood. Nor did he ever afterwards form two stronger or more congenial friendships than those which bound him to Scott and Campbell. From the time, however, that he may be said to have relinquished public life, a far more varied sphere of intercourse and correspondence opened up to him, especially with some remarkable men of the highest literary ability, and with ideas and sentiments congenial with his own. This will growingly appear in the letters which follow.

177. TO JAMES MACKENZIE, ESQ.

CADDER, GLASGOW, *March* 7, 1840.

MY DEAR SIGNORE,— . . . I am glad that you like Vinet. You may keep him for six months if you like. He is a most amiable, excellent, tolerant man, who understands the difference between the spirit and the letter. He has written several other things; an essay Sur la Liberté des Cultes; Essais de Philosophie Morale et de Morale Religieuse, which last I shall also lend you. It contains reviews by him of different works of modern French literature, very good and original. He is a thinker, and a Christian thinker. He is the Professor of Théologie Dogmatique at Lausanne, and his large unsectarian spirit is a great blessing to the place. He is acknowledged as a man of real piety by the highest Calvinists, and yet he is no Calvinist.

. . . My dear friend, it is a blessed hope which is set before us, of being like Him, and being with Him for ever; and it is now a blessed though a painful and difficult business allotted to us, to acquire that likeness, by every event, and duty, and joy, and sorrow of life. What else have we to do in reality? O blessed and holy occupation, to find the will of God in everything, and to make it our will. Let me hear pretty often from you. It is good for us to have intercourse. Write as short as you please. I wish much to show you a little portrait of Madame de Broglie, one of the most beautiful things you ever saw, so natural and yet so supernatural. . . .—Yours ever affectionately,

T. ERSKINE.

178. TO THE SAME.

CADDER HOUSE, *March* 13, 1840.

MY DEAR FRIEND,— . . . I wish I had you here for a little while, to doctor you, and to get from you any balm

that you yourself have proved to be healing to the heart. Life is good, just according as we use it to learn righteousness; and I feel so little progress in this *prima philosophia*, and occasionally such a weariness—such a sense of nothingness in all that I do or see. It is melancholy with so high a calling to be so little filled and satisfied with it. I don't think that you feel weariness much, at least I never heard you give any utterance to it. I knew once a little deaf and dumb boy, who worked at a loom in a little *to-fall* appended to his father's cottage, alone all the day. A friend of mine asked him if he wearied. He wrote for an answer on a slate, "We ought not to murmur against God." It was a good answer; so many weary without ever thinking that in so doing they are murmuring against God. Our nearest neighbour here is Mrs. Charles Stirling, the widow of Charles, who died last October. She is a fine creature, of even spirit, blessed with equilibrium. She has just been here to take my poor old stiff sister out an airing, for such she is, although younger by a year than I am; but the legacy which a rheumatic fever has left her embarrasses her a good deal, though she seeks to learn righteousness by what she gets, and thus not to feed on husks, but on the manna, which is the pith and kernel of all events, even the will of our Father.—Yours ever affectionately,

T. ERSKINE.

179. TO MADAME FOREL.

LINLATHEN, *October* 14, 1840.

DEAR FRIEND,—It was a real enjoyment to me to receive a letter from you, and to be enabled by it to think and feel along with my much esteemed friends at Lausanne. I am very undeserving of the kind and flattering things which you say *à mon égard*, but I gave a grateful and cordial welcome to the love which dictates them. I am happy to

think of your husband and yourself, and of any of your friends, as maintaining the conflict, to which we are called in this world—the conflict of the invisible against the visible, of the spirit against the flesh, of eternity against time. It is a sore conflict, and much we need all the warning and encouragement that the experience of others, our fellow-soldiers, can give us. You are in the midst of dissensions, and we are in the midst of dissensions, and there is amongst us such a difference of opinion as to the way of arriving at righteousness, that we almost forget that it is the same end which we are all aiming at; hence much uncharitableness. There is a party in the Church of England at present who are so impressed with the evil of setting up the right of private judgment too much that they would forbid private judgment altogether, and place religion in submission and obedience merely. This is good, as it is necessary, for the infancy of the Christian life, as it is also for the infancy of human life, but surely there is something higher than this intended for us by Him who said, "I call you no more servants, but friends, for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth, whereas all things that I have heard of my Father, I have made known unto you." Yet these men are pious men, and some of them are highly gifted intellectually. If the *Quarterly Review* comes to Lausanne, you will find a curious and interesting article in the last number, written by one of that party, as a criticism on Carlyle's works. There are many true things in the article, but that exaggerated idea of blind submission, without discerning the rightness of the thing submitted to, is so much pressed that it injures the effect even of what is true.

I am entirely of your opinion as to Madame Guyon, and to that class of religious writers. I am formed to be a receiver and a continual receiver, but at the same time I

must judge and choose what I ought to receive. A simple passivity must end in pantheism, as you rightly observe. The great lesson to be learned in life is to make the right choice—to refuse the evil and to choose the good, to distinguish between them and to prefer the one to the other. You are pleased when you see in your child just rising out of infancy a readiness to obey you in everything, but you would be sorry if you saw that as he grew older, he continued still entirely dependent on you for direction, and did not himself learn to know the right way through the wilderness of life. The child does not give to the parent the highest honour when he merely gives him submission, and does not perceive the rightness and wisdom and love of the precept to which he submits.

Dear friend, I wish I were sitting beside you, that I might make sure of your not misunderstanding me, for I feel that on this subject there is great risk of misunderstanding one another; it is so difficult in words, and even in thought and feeling, to preserve the true equilibrium. When we see one part of a truth generally overlooked, we are disposed to become its champions, and like the old knights, to claim from all the world the acknowledgment that it is best and fairest. The Wesleyans have been generated by Calvinism, of which they are the supplement. Calvinism, by what I cannot but think a very absurd misconception of the meaning of the 7th chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, teaches that a man may be in a safe state, and may be a true believer, whilst he continues carnal, and sold under sin, according to the 14th verse. The Wesleyans, seeing the evil of this, have set up their doctrine of perfection, which is certainly true in the main, for a man may hold fast the grace of God, and that grace is sufficient to keep him from evil, but their statements of it are not always wise or right. Again,

Calvinism teaches that if a man is once in Christ, he will certainly continue so to the end. The Wesleyans see the evil of this, and its inconsistency with many of the warnings of the Bible, and so they teach that a man may fall from a state of salvation and recover it again half-a-dozen times in the course of an hour, giving that place to temporary movable feelings which belongs properly to principles, or habits founded on principles, and elevating affections above the sense of duty, which nevertheless is the true basis and substratum of everything that is really good and high in morals or religion. I believe that the Wesleyans have done much good in England, and in the English colonies, as missionaries; but the individuals of them whom I have known seem to me not fully to apprehend that the way of the cross is not only the way in which Jesus walked for us, but also the only way in which we can walk with Him, and that He was a man of sorrows, not that we might be exempt from sorrows, but that we might suffer with Him and sorrow with Him, in the same spirit and to the same result.

As Wesleyanism rose out of Calvinism, so Quakerism rose out of Puritanism. The doctrinal creed of the Puritans appeared to George Fox, the apostle of Quakerism, to smother the spirit under the letter; against this he protested, and in his protest he threw away forms and letters altogether, making religion to consist in the simple relation of each individual soul with God, independent of positive facts, including truths revealed by God in any other way than that of the individual conscience. I can understand in the same way that Madame Guyon, and the race of mystics that have risen up in the bosom of Popery, have been generated by the over-working and outside-working of the Roman Catholic system, and they teach over-passivity in opposition to over-activity. Thus man oscillates. What

a comfort it is to know that God really desires the good of every soul that He hath made, and that He really guides every soul that waits upon Him in humility and sincerity, notwithstanding its imperfect or fallacious theories. Let us not make haste, but let us abide in Jesus, desiring to be educated by God, so that we may not only wish to walk in the way of righteousness, but that we may also discern wherein righteousness consists, and patiently and lovingly walk in it.

I am very grateful for M. Vinet's letter, and when I think that I have anything to say to him, which is worth telling him, I shall write to him. I feel most deeply for him in his present circumstances, and I remember him before God, asking help for him according to his need. I love them both most affectionately, and I believe that he seeks not his own glory, but the will of God, which gives me confidence that he will be guided in that wisdom which is from above. I am very anxious to see his book. I seldom meet with any striking thought without thinking of him, and wishing to convey it to him. I have just now a sentence before me which I shall transcribe for him: "The will to the deed, the inward principle to the outward act, is as the kernel to the shell; but yet, in the first place, the shell is necessary for the kernel, and that by which it is commonly known; and in the next place, as the shell comes first, and the kernel grows gradually and hardens within it, so is it with the moral principle in man. Legality precedes morality in every individual, even as the Jewish dispensation preceded the Christian in the education of the world at large."[1] . . .—Yours most affectionately,

T. ERSKINE.

[1] Coleridge.

180. TO THE REV. ALEXANDER J. SCOTT.

LINLATHEN, *Oct.* 17, 1840.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I congratulate you and Mrs. Scott on this gift of God[1]—much desired, I have no doubt, with a desire the shadow and emanation of the desire of God when He said, "Let us make man after our image." A child is such an object for the outpouring of tenderness and pity, and for calling out hope, and the prayer of hope and trust to the Great Father on its behalf; born to trouble as the sparks fly upward, yet destined through that very trouble to learn the holiness and attain the blessedness of God.

Those in this house who can best sympathise with you, from similar experience, are not wanting in sympathy in the present case. Give our united affectionate regards and wishes to the dear mother and the dear childie. . . .—Yours affectionately, T. ERSKINE.

181. TO LORD RUTHERFURD.

LINLATHEN, *Oct.* 23, 1840.

. . . WE have had sunsets this year that recalled to me the years of youth, when as yet the glory had not left the earth. I wish you real happiness, my dear friend, quiet peace which can look before and after, belonging more to the inside life than to the outside. You know that I love you and that I care for you—soul as well as body. Don't you believe me?—Yours ever,

T. ERSKINE.

[1] A daughter, born after years of childlessness.

182. TO MRS. BURNETT.

LINLATHEN, *Feb.* 2, 1841.

. . . WHAT a wonderful scene this world is, considered as a school in which God is educating immortal beings for eternity! Look to Africa, to Asia, to America, even to Europe, even to England, London, Manchester, Glasgow, Dundee, as schools for eternity! It is a great mystery. The God of infinite love, who so loved every individual man as to give His only-begotten Son to die for him and to be his living Head, who has all wisdom and all power, He looks on this strange sight and lets it proceed. Assuredly then there is a purpose of wise love in all this which will yet be manifested. That is the blue sky beyond the clouds. We must by faith pierce the cloud, and strengthen our hearts by looking to the end of the Lord; or, as Gambold says,

> "Thus all the sequel is well weighed.
> I cast myself upon Thine aid,
> A sea where none can sink."

"He hath shut in all under unbelief, that He might have mercy on all." No wonder that such an idea drew from the apostle the exclamation which follows, "O the depth," etc. . . .

We have had a great many deaths lately amongst our friends. One of my first continental friends, a Genevese lady, died of a paralytic stroke lately.[1] She was on her knees praying before going to bed, and she was one who prayed in spirit and in truth. It was a sweet way of dying. . . .—Yours affectionately,

T. ERSKINE.

[1] Madame Cramer. See "Letters of Sympathy and Consolation" in this volume.

An intimation of this death was conveyed to Mr. Erskine in the following letter from M. Gaussen :—

Samedi, Décembre 19, 1840.

DÈS que notre amie fut expirée je pensai à vous et j'éprouvai le besoin de vous écrire. Mais M. Cramer me pria de ne pas le faire : il voulait être le premier à vous donner cette triste information. Faut-il dire *triste?* il faudrait dire heureuse, glorieuse,—car on vous aura dit qu'elle est morte comme elle avait vécu,—en prière. Il y a eu dans le détail de cet évènement des témoignages bien touchants de l'amour paternel dont elle était l'objet. Cher ami, vous aviez déjà perdu votre mère. Depuis que le Seigneur a arrêté pour un tems les battements de ce cœur qui vous aimait tant, il n'y avait probablement pas sur la terre un être qui vous chérit plus maternellement que ne faisait cette bonne Madame Cramer. Son souvenir ici est "comme une essence de bonne senteur;" elle a été retirée dans la pleine communion de son Seigneur, et il y aura bien des âmes au dernier jour qui rendront grâces de l'avoir rencontrée sur leur chemin d'ici bas. Dieu nous donne de demeurer nous mêmes dans la communion de cette charité de Dieu qui s'est dite plus tendre qu'une mère et devant laquelle les pères mêmes ne sont que mauvais (*πονηροὶ ὑπάρχοντες* —Luke xi.).

Je vous ai envoyé il y a plus d'un mois un volume que j'ai publié sur la *théopneustie :* j'espère qu'il vous sera parvenu. C'est un sujet auquel je pensais quand vous étiez encore parmi nous. J'aurais aimé à en reparler avec vous. Si après l'avoir lu vous pensez qu'il pût intéresser Madame Erskine et sa sœur, je vous serai obligé de le leur prêter. Je l'ai fait avec le désir que des femmes chrétiennes pussent le lire. Adieu, mon cher ami; que le Seigneur vous garde, et que sa grâce et sa paix vous soient

multipliées dans la connaissance de Dieu et de Jésus Christ notre Seigneur. Je vous prie de présenter mes respects fraternels à Madame Paterson et à son mari. J'espère qu'ils reçoivent de bonnes nouvelles de leur fils. Si vous écrivez à vos parents de Glentyan, je vous prie de me rappeler à leur amitié. Vous apprendrez avec douceur mais sans étonnement, que notre cher M. Cramer est tout ce qu'un Chrétien doit être dans un tel deuil, tendre, ferme, calme, espérant, et regardant aux choses d'en haut, où Jésus Christ est, assis à la droite de Dieu. Adieu, mon cher frère. Dieu vous garde.—Votre très affectionné, L. GAUSSEN.

183. TO M. GAUSSEN.

LINLATHEN, *Feb.* 10, 1841.

DEAR GAUSSEN,—I thank you for your kind letter. Our dear Madame Cramer has gone home. When my heart seeks for her, it is no longer at Geneva that I find her. I must look higher than the Rue des Belles-filles or the Plain-palais. I must look to Him of whom Moses in the 90th Psalm says, "Thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations." When I first visited the Continent, I was by the kindness of God introduced to three ladies connected with Geneva, through whom as His blessed channels God caused His kindness to flow into my heart. I received a friendship from them such as I had scarcely found at home. And now two of the three are gone hence, not lost but no more visible to the eye, no more audible but their spirits are with their Father, and the day is near when they shall again be visible and audible, when the corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and the mortal immortality. What a precious thing love is! the love of a spirit revealing to us the preciousness of the love of God. Dear M. Cramer, what a blank for him! he knows that it is well

with her for ever, and he has the joyful hope of partaking the joy of his Lord with her and all his Father's children; but in the meantime the cheerer and comforter of his existence is taken away, and his few remaining days must be spent in comparative solitude, unshared by her, affectionate though his children are. I hope Madame Vernet will be spared for a little while for the sake of many. She is my third, and now the only remaining of the three, and most dearly and deeply do I love her. Your book has not arrived; let me know how I may inquire after it. I sent your letter to Mrs. Erskine, as I had not your book to send. She, and her sister, and Manie live at present at Glentyan with James the captain. We heard from her yesterday; a word of kindness and holiness, as her letters always are. My two sisters and Captain Paterson and I now live together at Linlathen, where I hope, if ever you come to England again, you will visit us. Give my affectionate love to your dear family, your venerable mother, your sister, and your daughter. Remember me to Merle, whom I love no less than I did at Hamburgh. Farewell, dear friend.—Yours ever affectionately, T. ERSKINE.

184. TO THE REV. J. M'LEOD CAMPBELL.

LINLATHEN, *Feb.* 27, 1841.

BELOVED FRIEND,—I cannot tell you how grateful to my heart your love is, and all the expressions of it. I like ties of kindness—outward and visible signs of the unseen spirit of love—special motives for prayer, binding souls together in the spirit.

My dear brother, I value your love much, both as *your* love and as *God's* love. I have confidence in the truth and stability of your love, and all here are of one mind in the appreciation of you and your affection.

Give my affectionate love to your dear wife. We do indeed not find it difficult to rejoice with her and you on this event.[1] May the good Father bless the parents and the children, and make your Thomas Erskine a better man and a wiser than him after whom he is named. I should be sorry to see myself reproduced entire in any human being; and if I thought that the name could effect such a thing, I should positively object to its being imposed on the young immortal; but I have the trust that *the names* into which he is to be baptised, is the name which will be the mould of his character and the fountain of his spiritual life—the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. . .—Yours ever most affectionately,

T. ERSKINE.

185. TO THOMAS CARLYLE, ESQ.

LINLATHEN, *March* 23, 1841.

DEAR MR. CARLYLE,—Your kindly thoughts are highly valued, and your expression of them always most acceptable.

I thank you for your sympathy in the matter of my eyes, which I should not feel so heavy an affliction as I do, were I able to hold that converse with my own thoughts for which you give me credit. I believe that it is to teach me that lesson that my present circumstances have been allotted to me; but I am a slow scholar, most apt to fall into some form or other of castle-building, the resort and the nourishment of an indolent mind. I think of that word of Jesus Christ, "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do; and now, O Father, glorify thy Son," etc., and am compelled to conclude that my life is no following of His life.

[1] The birth of a son called Thomas Erskine. See "Memorials of J. M'Leod Campbell, D.D.," vol. i. p. 159.

Proceed with your Puritans, it is the work given you to do. Blessed are they who see a work set before them, and are conscious of a capacity to do it. It is a great undertaking to lift them out of the rubbish; if you love them well enough you will find out their mystery of life. Why do you love them? If you could explain to yourself and to others that *why*, the business would be well advanced, for it is no dead thing that you love. Of course you know Baxter's life by himself. One feels provoked that he does not tell us more of the things which he saw and touched every day, especially about Cromwell himself. It is a curious thing that he says about "his natural hilarity being such as other men have only when they have taken a cup too much." He says also, what seems opposed to other testimony, that he "was of excellent parts for affection and oratory." He was one of the Jötuns, or what do you call the Norse Titans?

When you make your escape from London, pray come down, you and dear Mrs. Carlyle, by a Dundee steamer—they are the best—and come here and inquire after mountains and ocean places, which can make the mind free, if such places there are. In this neighbourhood the industrial Jötun has blown his poisonous breath upon everything. We have a stream near the house, which I remember clear and sweet, and full of active joyful life; now it is like the sentina of an apothecary's or chemist's establishment, foaming with unhealthy artificial froth, and reeking forth evil smells, and substituting ill-omened rats for the gay mottled par; and tall chimneys vomit out pestiferous smoke. *Enfin*, this is to be explained and received on the same principle as the failure of eyesight.

We have a sea near us, the Firth of Tay, along which run for many miles delicious links, of sweet sward and most fantastical miniatures of hills and valleys, through

which I used to ride and walk, holding intercourse with nature as best I might; but the Jötun has practised a railroad through the heart of it, which has plucked out the heart of its mystery. Nevertheless there are still trees and fields here, which in the appropriate season become green and tell their wondrous tale, as others of their kind do elsewhere, and we have the blue vault and the high stars, and liberty of access to the Highest, debarred only by our own evil.

I am very sorry that Mrs. C. is invalided. I feel gratitude and affection to you both for your kindness to me.

I have got your Lectures, and my sister, Mrs. Paterson, kindly reads to me, so I have the use of eyes, though not my own. There are advantages as well as disadvantages in this way of it. Did you hear any of Scott's Political Lectures?[1] I think they must have been very good; words in them for the masses of Manchester and Glasgow, as well as for the rulers.—Yours affectionately, T. ERSKINE.

186. TO MADAME FOREL.

LONDON, *June* 28, 1841.

DEAR FRIEND,—I have received your packet, and return you many thanks. I have also received Vinet's *Nouveaux Discours*,[2] into which I have looked a little with much pleasure; but as I am at present alone, separated from those of my family to whom I am obliged to be indebted for much of my knowledge of books, in consequence of the weakness of my own eyes, I have not made much progress in them yet. I was very much struck by the second "Le méchant et le jour de la calamité." The certainty, the inevitable, infallible certainty, of the connection

[1] On Chartism and Socialism. See Discourses by Alexander J. Scott, pp. 130, 160.

[2] "Nouveaux Discours sur quelques sujets religieux." Paris, 1841.

between moral good and happiness—moral evil and misery—is an immense doctrine, full of important results. The gospel does not weaken this doctrine; faith in Jesus Christ does not deliver us from this eternal law, that "verily it must be ill with the wicked," but teaches us to approve and love that law, even in its application to ourselves, and carries us safe through it, to the other side, where its fruits grow. Let us be patient, dear friend, and trust in the Lord with all our heart, for in due time we shall reap, if we faint not. I am very sorry that your eyes are troubling you; I have nevertheless sent you a book, a work of my own, which I have spoken to you about, and from which that extract about "accepting our punishment" is taken—the Brazen Serpent—which you may let dear Mme. Vinet see. I have also sent a book for M. Vinet, called "The Kingdom of Christ," which I am sure he will read with interest, although he will disagree much and often with it. The writer is a friend of mine, whom I value highly, as a man of great worth and great intellectual power.[1] . . . Alas! dear and honoured Madame Necker:[2] "The path of the just is as the shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day." . . .—Yours ever affectionately,

T. ERSKINE.

187. TO MADAME DE STAËL.

Sept. 8, 1841.

WE must be in earnest in the business of crucifying the flesh. We must die with Jesus. His death-pang must pass through us, that we may truly partake of His life.[3] We must not be too tender of our own feelings. . . .

[1] F. D. Maurice. [2] Authoress of "L'Education Progressive."

[3] "*Accepting our punishment* is just being of one mind with God, in hating and condemning sin, and longing for its destruction. It is submitting ourselves to the process of its destruction, and setting our seals to the

Our wisdom cannot judge God's. Our wisdom is to acknowledge God's wisdom, and to wait on Him that He would reveal it to us. What you say of your mother praying for me on the 1st June is very striking to me. I do not recollect anything in particular to mark that day, but I learn this from her prayer, that on that day, as on every day, most important concerns for my soul were transacted without my being aware of their importance. Every negligence in the inner history of my thoughts and desires, every conflict between the Spirit of God and the spirit of self-indulgence within me, every inward confessing of Christ as the Lord of my being, though bearing no outward sign, is, I am well assured, of unspeakable importance in the sight of God, and fitted to call forth the intense prayers of all those in whose hearts the Spirit of God is acting as an intercessor for others. And it is a painful indication of the little sense that I have of the mind of the Spirit concerning me, that such prayers can be made for me by others, whilst I remain myself so cold and apathetic. I had another friend, also now dead, who used to tell me that she at particular times felt constrained to pray for me, as if I were in great spiritual danger. She was one who lived very near God, and prayed much, and I used to wonder that I was not able to connect any felt state of difficulty in my own mind with those calls to prayer in my behalf which she experienced. At last I came to the conclusion that these prayers did not mark any particular difficulty in my path, but only that the general and continual difficulty of every day was then specially made known to her soul, that I might, by hearing of it, be stirred up to a greater activity of prayer

righteousness of God in the process. *It is the death-pang of the crucified Head thrilling through the members and accomplishing in it what it did in the Head.*"—*The Brazen Serpent*, 2d edition, p. 48.

and vigilance, seeing how critical my condition appeared to the loving Spirit of God.

188. TO THE REV. J. M'LEOD CAMPBELL.

LINLATHEN, *Sept.* 28, 1841.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—I have blamed myself much for not having written to you when we heard of Mrs. Campbell's illness, and now your little boy is ill.

We can sympathise, not only because we love you, but because we have known like sorrow. This is God's training of you, beloved friends, that you may set your hope in Him, and learn to take joyfully the spoiling of your goods, seeking to be rich towards God,—rich in having God,—in possessing a place in His fatherly heart; rich in being conformed to His will. This last is the thing meant, I believe,—the oil in the vessel,—but it is the fruit of the former; it is emptied by the golden pipe, out of the Olive Tree.

My dear brother and sister, I hope that by the time this letter reaches you, the Lord may have relieved your anxiety about your child. I know that He can, and I know that He will, if it is good for you and for your child. I know that what is best for you will happen. I know that wisdom and love and power are all engaged on your side.

What more can your most loving friend desire for you? "Be of good cheer, it is I, be not afraid."

Captain Paterson is gone to Edinburgh to meet Mrs. Erskine. If he thinks he could be of any use to you, I am sure that he will go to you. Let us have a single line, telling us how the child is, and how you two and Donald are.—With affection from my sisters, I remain ever yours,

T. ERSKINE.

189. TO THE REV. J. M'LEOD CAMPBELL.

LINLATHEN, *Sunday, October* 3, 1841.

MY BELOVED FRIEND AND BROTHER,—We have just heard of the Lord's dealing with you, in taking hence your little Thomas Erskine Campbell.

Well, he is taken hence, but he is not out of the hand or heart of God, and it is only for a short time that he is separated from you. The great Father who made you His symbol towards the child, acknowledges the fatherly spirit in you, and will yet satisfy it abundantly. Can you doubt that, dear friends, mourning, suffering friends, and will you not tarry the Lord's leisure, assured that it is good for the little darling, and good for your own souls?

Dear Mrs. Campbell, I feel exceedingly for her torn motherly heart; but let her trust in the name of the Lord and stay herself upon her God; let her remember the end of the Lord, that He is very pitiful.

For the last month I had daily been thinking before God, both of you and of the little one, feeling that I had a special call to love him and pray for him. There are two here who can enter by deep experience into your circumstances and those of dear Mrs. Campbell. I am sorry that I don't know his face. I should have liked to have remembered him personally.

We are just going to the parish church, but I cannot let the post go without sending with it the expression of our love and sympathy. Dear Mrs. Campbell, the Lord comfort you and be to you a present help in this hour of trouble.—Yours most affectionately, T. ERSKINE.

190. TO THOMAS CARLYLE, ESQ.

LINLATHEN, *Nov.* 24, 1841.

. . . I HOPE you are proceeding with Oliver's life. He was a grand fellow, and full of good English domestic life, I am persuaded, of which no man could require a better proof than his calling up one of the maids of his house, whom he knew to be a Quaker, and telling her that George Fox was in town, for that he had met him that day. His appointment of Hale, too, is good. But it is very difficult to collect specimens of the primary formation of such a man. It would be pleasant to light on an early or at all events an inner collection of letters—an interior *nota Falerni*—to show what he was before he made the move, or what he *really* was after it. There have been a good many rather considerable breakers of formulas; do you know any good makers of them? or do they only grow themselves unmade? I was struck by a dictum of Coleridge the other day, in his *Literary Remains*,[1] on this subject; he remarks that the shell comes before the kernel, and is the prepared receptacle for it, to nourish and protect it, in its germination. To get good shells is still more important, as it is much more difficult, than to break bad ones. . . . Believe me to be, with sincere wishes for your welfare, and with much gratitude for your kindness, yours, T. ERSKINE.

191. TO M. CRAMER MALLET.

LINLATHEN, *Feb.* 25, 1842.

MON CHER MONSIEUR,—Je vais vous écrire en Anglais afin que je puisse m'entretenir avec vous plus à mon aise, et parceque je sais bien que Madame ou *une de ces dames*

[1] Vol. i. p. 338.

aura la bonté d'être mon interprète. I am very sorry to hear such an account of your respected father's condition. It seems as if the thought of the shortness of the time which necessarily must separate between him and his loved companion ought to reconcile him to the temporary isolation to which he is subjected. At the same time, I sympathise fully with his sorrow. God never gave him such a gift with the intention that he should lose it, even for a time, without a deep wound to his heart. I cannot but believe that the God of love approves of all sorrow springing from true and deep affection, and uses it as a part of His training, to purify human hearts from selfishness and worldliness. If the sorrow leads his thoughts and desires to God, it is profitable to him; but if it spends itself in mere lamentations over his solitude and widowhood, it is a lost sorrow—a sorrow in vain—which I hope M. Cramer's sorrow will not be. "Accept thy punishment, and I will remember my covenant to thee,"[1] says our God to us. His inability to take his usual walks is a great aggravation of his distress, for his sleep will probably be affected by this, and the whole nervous system depends so much on the sleep. I should have liked well to have seen him here, but I still hope to see him at Geneva—which I intend to visit as soon as I can,—but the condition of the country at present makes me unwilling to leave home.

The distress and poverty in all our manufacturing districts are appalling. As yet, the sufferers have shown great patience, but the question of the Corn Laws is a very agitating question at such a time, especially as there is no want of public haranguers who represent to the people that all their present distress arises out of the Corn Laws, and that these laws are made by the landowners merely for their own interest. It is a large subject and

[1] Leviticus xxvi. 41-43,—a passage very frequently quoted.

an intricate one, and one which is not to be decided without taking into consideration a great many circumstances which are generally overlooked by those who look at us from a distance.

Your account of your own revolution is very interesting and instructive. This is the age of revolutions; we may expect them everywhere. The intelligence, or rather the intellectual activity, of the lower classes of society has made a prodigious advance within the last fifty years; and intelligence is power; but the moral culture and the religious culture has not kept pace with the intellectual activity; and without a right state of morals power cannot be exercised well. Here lies the general difficulty. Men insist on judging of everything, though they have neither sufficient extent of knowledge nor sufficient unselfishness to judge aright. I believe that we are near some great catastrophe; there is no reverence left for anything which has been considered venerable by our fathers, and love, *la charité*, the only true bond for uniting men, either as families or nations, is fast disappearing, and no bond is left but selfishness, or sense of common interest, which cannot stand; for men's interests, or their views of their interests, will be continually opposing them to each other.

Farewell, dear friends. I think of you all with much love, as my brothers and sisters. T. ERSKINE.

Give my special affectionate remembrance to dear M. Cramer, and to each family of the common *tige*, and by name to your own three ladies and three children, and the Florence family, Gabriel and thee. Remember me to M. Gaussen and to M. Rilliet. I have received his book on the Epistle to the Philippians.

192. TO MRS. BURNETT.

2 GLOUCESTER PLACE, NEW ROAD, LONDON,
June 27, 1842.

DEAR MRS. BURNETT,— . . . I was yesterday at Woolwich and heard Mr. Scott. He first read Acts xix. After ending the passage beginning verse 13, he said that this history seemed to represent much of what had been called preaching the gospel since that time. These sons of Sceva had not themselves the spirit that was in Jesus and that was in Paul, but they thought they might use the name of Jesus, preached by Paul, as a charm to cast out evil spirits. In like manner, since that time many who had nothing of the spirit of Jesus had yet taken His name and His doctrine into their lips with the thought that they could thus cast out of men's souls the prince of the darkness of this world with the like success as these exorcists, only that the evil spirit has been satisfied with despising their vain effort without putting them to such open shame, which would have injured his cause by exposing the delusion. But within himself he still says to them, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know, but who are ye?" The occasional conversion of souls under such ministry makes nothing against the truth of this, for a tombstone or an execution may be the occasion of a conversion, but the office of the Church is to teach in the spirit of Jesus. He afterwards preached on the words, "If ye be led of the Spirit ye are not under the law." He showed how little men seemed even to aim at being in the Spirit; how contented they were, even those who seemed religious, with doing things, not in the love of them, but because they were commanded by God to do them, and how they carried this same principle into the doctrines which they held as their creed, for they thus held them, not because they saw their truth in the

light of the Spirit, but because they conceived that this creed was prescribed to them by God. He desired that he might not be misunderstood, as if he had said that a man was to do nothing, and to believe nothing but what he himself loved or saw; but he only wished men to consider that so long as they were doing it in this way they were doing it not in the Spirit but under the law.

When a man is not led by the Spirit he ought to be under the law. It is his next best state, but it is not his Christian calling. I feel that this is a most important subject, though perhaps so shortly stated it may not come with much conviction to your mind. I scarcely ever met with a person who did not give me the impression that he held his creed under the law, referring to particular texts, but not to a Spirit, apparently not even seeing the desirableness of it. Sometimes I used to feel this even with your loved and venerated father; at the same time there was no man that I had then met with who was half so free, or with whom I felt so free to say what was the feeling or the conviction of my heart, without fear of being charged or suspected of heresy. . . .—Ever yours affectionately,

T. ERSKINE.

193. TO MRS. MAURICE.

2 GLO'STER PLACE, NEW ROAD, *24th July.*

DEAR MRS. MAURICE,—I have taken the liberty of sending you a copy of Madame Necker's work on Education, of which we spoke the other day. It is a pleasure to me to look back upon the intellectual and sociable and eminently earnest old lady. She had been for many years in a great measure withdrawn from society by her deafness, and a certain desolateness of feeling connected partly with that infirmity, and still more by a sense of the vanity of

temporal things, and by family sorrows; the chiefest and sorest of which was the death of a much-loved daughter, who, I think, was burned to death. She had a heart for friendship, and delighted in intimate communions, one of which she enjoyed to a very great degree, with Madame de Broglie, the daughter of her old friend Madame de Staël, who, after the death of her own mother, and increasingly after the death of Madame Necker's daughter, became a daughter and more than a daughter to her. The chapter on married life, in the third volume, is very much indebted to her hand, I believe.

My acquaintance with this old lady, and my pleasurable remembrance of it, make me wish to introduce her to you and Mr. Maurice. I hope to see him and you once more before I leave London, which I propose doing next week. —I remain, with great regard, yours most truly,

T. ERSKINE.

194. TO JAMES MACKENZIE, ESQ.

LINLATHEN, *Sept.* 5, 1842.

MY DEAREST FRIEND,—It is a grief to me to have so little to do with one whom I love so well. I have often intended to write to you, when things or thoughts, or persons that interested me came in my way; but indolence or something else prevented me, and left me the mere longing to communicate with you. I spent about three months this spring and summer in London, having gone up primarily to hear Scott lecture on his old subject, the mutual relations of religion and philosophy. I felt an increasing value for his views on the subject, and an increasing admiration for his talents as a lecturer. I afterwards heard him deliver two lectures on Schism.[1] He began by showing wherein true unity consists. God is the only real centre, and sepa-

[1] See Discourses by Alexander J. Scott, pp. 230-280.

ration from Him the only real schism. Then our union to Him must be spiritual, and therefore schism cannot consist in a difference of form, as unity cannot consist in a similarity of form. These lectures were taken by a short-hand writer, and perhaps you have seen them, through Miss Paterson or some other. I went down to Woolwich pretty often to hear him preach on Sundays, always with great satisfaction.

Madame de Staël came over when I was in London, which was a great pleasure to me. I have gotten from her some very beautiful productions of Mme. de Broglie's pen, which I should like you to read, but of which I cannot give copies. One is an account of Mrs. Fry's visit to Paris, full of living spirit. Madame de Staël has also been kind enough to give me a most striking portrait of her mother, which I should like you to see. Surely you can spare a day or two, now when the Queen's visit has necessarily thrown all loyal subjects idle, so that they may be at least their own masters as much as the turn-outs at Manchester. We are in a strange state nationally,—near some great explosion. There seems to be no law nor government. If things settle down of themselves, well and good, but there is no strong hand in the State to put them down. Come over before the break comes, that we may have a little quiet anticipation of the joy of the kingdom which cannot be shaken.—With best regards to your ladies, I ever am, yours most affectionately, T. ERSKINE.

195. TO MISS ANN DUNDAS.

DEAR ANN,—I had heard it[1] from George on Saturday, and had it not been that some county business, which I

1 The death of her brother and his cousin, William Dundas, eldest son of James Dundas, Esq. of Ochtertyre.—See preceding volume, p. 16.

could not neglect, prevented me, I should have accompanied Davie to Touch this day, less with the thought of comforting you, than with the feeling of a great common loss, which should bring us together and knit us together. I feel that the most loving, affectionate, disinterested being amongst us is taken away, and that a great blank has been made in our family circle. I am just interrupted by the coming in of my neighbour, Mr. Dick, with whom I must go about some business which has been imposed on us as magistrates; but I think it better to send this line than to delay acknowledging your welcome letter, telling us of the gentle circumstances attending his death. The God of love was with him. He who tasted death for every man was with him; I rejoice that David is with you. Give my most affectionate brotherly love to each of your party, and take it to yourself, my dear Ann.—Yours ever, T. ERSKINE.

19*th Sept.*

196. TO MISS ANN DUNDAS.

LINLATHEN, *Sept.* 25, 1842.

MY DEAR ANN,—I am most thankful for the accounts which you have received of the circumstances attending the death of your dearest brother, the most amiable of men. I believe that his ear would be more open to those with whom he had never been in the habit of discussing and disputing about Christianity, than to his own friends, and therefore, that although it seems to us sad that so loving a being should have died at a distance from his kindred, yet it was of the mercy of God. There certainly flowed through his heart a deeper stream of natural love than ever I saw in any man, and who can doubt that that stream is yet to be holy water in the kingdom of God? I loved him well, and yet I feel as if I had not made enough of him when I had him. I hope now to profit by the remembrance

of him, especially in the lesson of love—disinterested, noble love. Dearest Willy,—I feel for all of you his sisters and brothers, and desire to have the bond between us strengthened and tightened, and not weakened by this event. And I hope also, my dear friends, that you yourselves may profit in this same way, by a stroke which is intended by Him who inflicted it to go very deep. The great lesson of love is, *to die to one's-self.* Christ's love is always shown through *death*, just because the death of the *self* is both the great expression and the only way into love. We cannot love without dying to self, and we cannot die to self without love. The two things go together inseparably; in fact, they are opposite faces of the same thing—and that thing is, *eternal life.* I hope you will all pray much, and keep your hearts and your lips in humility and watchfulness, not thinking it any degradation to humble yourselves before each other, and to submit one to another in the fear of God. O Ann, the time past may suffice us all to have wrought our own will, which is iniquity; and now let us begin again our journey and our life.

I am thankful to have seen so much of him here, so that I have associated him with many places in-doors and out-of-doors. I know no one except Davie who had the same delight in living over past days, and recalling past friends; the *roots* of his heart went deep into our common nature, and entwined themselves with all his kind, beginning with his relations. It flatters our personal feelings—our vanity—to be loved for our own personal qualities, but it is *wholesome* to know that we are loved for something not personal, but belonging to us as members of one family, of one race, children of one Father, redeemed by one Saviour, who is the common Head of all. Dear friends, Ann, Mary, Eliza, Jemima—let us be thus minded, and if in anything we be otherwise minded, let us humbly seek

wisdom and strength from our Head. Farewell.—Yours ever affectionately, T. ERSKINE.

197. TO MRS. BURNETT.

LINLATHEN, *Oct.* 1, 1842.

So the earthly career of your sister-in-law[1] is accomplished. When I saw her this spring, I felt that she could not be long amongst you. I shall not soon forget her look of patience and unselfishness and dutifulness, indicating the good and honest heart—the good soil in which the good seed brings forth fruit an hundred-fold. My dear, . . . these are things for our admonition, let us trust. We have good reason to trust Him who hath not spared His own Son, but given Him up for us all, and not *for* us only, but *to* us, to be a living Head, in whom we have all things —guidance and strength, and participation in the very life and nature of God. How much I wish you would pay me a visit, and let my sisters get acquainted with M. and C. Relations should cultivate each other's friendship, and meeting is essential for that.

The Madame de Staël whom your friend speaks of is a great and special friend of mine. Her dear mother, Madame Vernet of Geneva, was one of the most highly favoured children of God that ever I have been privileged to know, and God gave her friendship to me as a gift which I hope to bless Him for throughout eternity. I have many outward memorials of her in the shape of letters, and a most speaking portrait which her kind daughter gave me this spring when I was in London. It is now twenty years since I went to the Continent, when I made many valuable friendships, and now only the children of these first friends remain. I feel that my going

[1] Miss Lamont Burnett, sister of the late John Burnett, Esq. of Kemnay.

abroad was a great event in God's providence towards me. Madame de Broglie was another, a most remarkable person both for genius and piety, I think superior to her mother (the great Madame de Staël) in the first as well as in the second. I am delighted that you are delighted with Vinet. I consider his friendship the greatest acquisition of my last trip to the Continent. He is what you would expect from his writings. There is a great deal of truth and reality about him. His family trials have been very severe, and they have been much blessed to him and his dear wife. Just before I knew him they had lost their only daughter, a girl about eighteen, who was the delight of their hearts, highly gifted. . . .

But my paper is done. Farewell, dear friend. Let us remember that word, "Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." Let us live there where our true life is. All join in love to you and yours. T. E.

198. TO LORD RUTHERFURD.

LINLATHEN, DUNDEE, *Oct.* 7, 1842.

MY DEAR RUTHERFURD,—The thought of having you here is a great pleasure to me. I have been intending to write to you a letter of urgency on this matter for some time back, and the circumstance to which you refer, the death of that most amiable and most affectionate of men,[1] increases in me the desire of getting nearer and keeping nearer to old friends. The last time that I was in your house he was there; he came separately. I was first, and John announced me under William's name, and when he came John announced him under mine. I never knew a more generous heart, and I have scarcely ever known any one who appreciated, as he did, the value of human kindness in all its gradations. Full of interest intellectually,

[1] William Dundas, Esq.

and still fuller of interest morally, we shall not look upon his like again. Those who have known him nearly will not easily find his place filled. My dear friend, the world is passing away, but I feel that nothing which is truly worth keeping can be lost. Faith in God implies faith in this. God is the element in which we were made to live, and in that element alone can we breathe freely. If we lived there, and met each other there, we should feel that there is in truth neither death nor separation. The value of any true disinterested affection is immeasurable by any earthly measure. Are we never to see Mrs. Rutherfurd here? I wish your *I* had been *we*. I hope she has made no vow against us, and that at least when the Granton Pier is finished she will venture; at any rate I have no vow which will keep me from seeing her when I come to Edinburgh, which I hope to do for a few days at least in the winter. My sisters join me in best regards to you both.—Yours ever, T. E.

199. TO JAMES MACKENZIE, ESQ.

LINLATHEN, *Oct.* 14, 1842.

MY DEAR SIGNORE,—I should have liked well to have seen you and your ladies in that sweet place, at this time, and if the circumstances had favoured the expedition, I should have thankfully accepted Miss Mackenzie's invitation; but I do not think that I can go away the very day that Mrs. Rich comes, even although I may not be the chief object of her visit. I thought of following you to Arran, when I heard of your going there; but the state of the country seemed to me to make it my duty to stay at home, and give what I could of employment to the people.

Rutherfurd has been here for a day or two, and has just gone this morning; and poor George Dundas, who is

mourning over the loss which his family has sustained in William.

I wish you had been with us yesterday. We opened an old tomb, probably older than Christianity in this country, in the centre of a large cairn. The body, which has entirely disappeared, bones and all, except two or three things like teeth, must have been placed in a sitting position. The coffin is stone, well put together, and pointed with clay; five feet long, and above three high, and as broad. An earthen vessel and the head of a spear were lying in it. Farewell, beloved Mackenzie.—Ever yours,

T. ERSKINE.

200. TO THE REV. J. M'LEOD CAMPBELL.

LINLATHEN, *October* 15, 1842.

BELOVED BROTHER,—We rejoice with you, and trust that you will be taught to receive in this new gift all that your Father intends for you in it. We are thankful that dear Mrs. Campbell is now so well. Are we not in His hands, and are not His hands a Father's hands?

I had proposed being in Glasgow before now, and even I had thought of going to Oban and seeing your dear father,[1] and refreshing my spirit by the sight of heathery mountains, which I have not looked on for many years. But man does not direct his own way, and it is neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem that we are to worship the Father. I have been kept at home by the feeling that at this time of general destitution all those who have any property or any capability of being helpful to their fellow-creatures by giving them employment or otherwise should be at their posts. . . . You know that Mrs. Paterson natur-

[1] Dr. Campbell of Kilninver, who died in his sleep, 17th January 1843. See "Memorials of Dr. M'Leod Campbell," vol. i. pp. 166, 172.

ally cares for you. This is the season of the death of her Daidie, and she lives over the whole history as the marked days pass on, marked by sorrow and yet marked by love.

With kindest love from all here to you all, I remain ever yours, T. ERSKINE.

201. TO MR. AND MRS. MACNABB.

6 MANOR PLACE, EDINBURGH, *Dec.* 29, 1842.

VERY DEAR FRIENDS,—. . . I have been surrounded for the last six months with starving unemployed labourers, and I have been giving them work, to an amount varying from twenty to thirty; which being just so much above my usual expenditure, I find myself tolerably drained; and besides, the faces of those whom I have been obliged to refuse employment to seem to me to reproach me for every shilling which I spend out of my own neighbourhood. You can understand this, and also the increased demands of all the local charities—Infirmary, Clothes Societies, etc.

I intend to go west to see your beloved brother[1] before I return home. It seems as if the Church of Scotland threw away its peace when it threw him out of its bosom. What confusion has there been ever since! What indeed can unite men together, but the sense of the universal love of God, which that Church rejected in the person of him who was honoured to preach it?

. . . Oh what a blessed secret it is that the will of God is the law of man's being—his true element, out of which his spirit sickens and dies; and that, as a water-plant can only thrive and have its true liberty of growth in the water, so man has his true liberty only in the will of God.—Yours (both) most affectionately, T. ERSKINE.

[1] Mrs. Macnabb was a sister of Dr. M'Leod Campbell. Her daughter married the son of Captain Paterson, who took his uncle's name after his decease, and is now the proprietor of Linlathen.

202. TO MRS. BURNETT.

Feb. 4, 1843.

. . . I REJOICE in being the introducer of Vinet to any one who can appreciate him. Don't send him back; keep him as a friend. I am at present reading a very interesting book of his, recently published, "Sur la Manifestation des Convictions Religieuses," which leads him to the question, "Whether there ought to be such a thing as an Established Church," which he thinks ought to be answered in the negative. I have not yet reached that part of the book which treats that subject, but what I have read is admirable. He considers the purpose of God in the institution of society as a spiritual education for all the members of it, which purpose requires the frank avowal of our moral and religious convictions. When a thing is said or done before us which we think wrong, he says that we feel our own spirits injured if we are prevented by any selfish motive from expressing our disapprobation, and we at the same time deprive the other party of the appeal to his conscience which such an expression would make. He speaks most feelingly of the heartless state of society, where everything that is most intimate and inward to the conscience and the heart is studiously suppressed, and where, consequently, all life becomes a dead conventionality.

I feel very much for your two depressed and melancholy neighbours. There is one suggestion that I would make to you in relation to such cases. I believe that the expression "promises of the Bible" is often misunderstood, so as to convey the idea that the love of God to man is conditional upon his catching at it or taking hold of it. To us is born a Saviour; that is no promise, it is the accomplishment of the first promise. When a child is born in a

family he is by birth the brother of the other children of the family; they have nothing to do in order to make him their brother. They cannot benefit by their relation unless they receive him as a brother, but the relation itself stands independent of them. So also God is our Father; and in the gift has been manifested the actual and honest purpose of God towards us and all men, which we may frustrate but not unmake. . . . I saw your youths at ——, but had no opportunity, or, alas! took no opportunity of intimate intercourse, such as Vinet speaks of, as the debt which man owes to man. The fear of doing it wrong weighs with me now much more than it used to do, so that I require a very distinct opening to induce me to enter into anything like religious conversation. If everything which we thought and said and did were, as it ought to be, a part of that worship which ought to be the business of life (for are we not called to be priests, offering up continually the sacrifice of ourselves?), it would not be felt to be a transition when we spoke directly of a truth which was always substantially uppermost in the mind. I know "Proverbial Philosophy," and like many things in it. Have you ever read any of Carlyle's writings? By the by, I don't remember whether I spoke to you of him when I was at Kemnay. His History of the French Revolution and his miscellaneous works and "Sartor Resartus" are all very remarkable, sometimes startling. I love the man; . . . he has a real belief in the invisible, which in these railroad and steam-engine days is a great matter. He sees and condemns the evil and baseness of living in the lower part of our nature instead of living in the higher. He is full of thoughts, of genius, and of high imagination.

203. TO JAMES MACKENZIE, ESQ.

LINLATHEN, *June* 7, 1843.

BELOVED MACKENZIE,—Are you really coming to see us, or are you content, and willing that we should be content, with speaking of it, or thinking of it? We are in the middle of much, and may expect strange results soon, and it does me good to see or hear a temperate man, who believes that not a sparrow falleth to the ground without our Father. I doubt not that a certain kind and degree of good may arise amongst certain persons out of our Scotch Kirk separation—more awakened thought, more zeal,—but I fear also more judging, more spiritual pride, etc.—as in the much and perhaps overlauded days of the Covenant and the hill-side.

I have been reading Carlyle's "Past and Present," out of which two elements he rears a horoscope of the future. He thinks that our great want is that of a true aristocracy—a strong intelligent domineering aristocracy in its two forms of governing and teaching. We need men who will "mak' us for to know it," like Sir Harry, and who will also "mak' us for to do it." These are our great desiderata, and he seems to hope much from men coming to be sensible that these are our needs. . . .—With best regards to your ladies, yours ever, T. ERSKINE.

204. TO THE REV. J. M'LEOD CAMPBELL.

LINLATHEN, *July* 2, 1843.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—We have had much sorrow lately. Dear Hannah Stirling of Keir has died of fever on a pleasure jaunt with her aunt, Lady Matilda Maxwell. She had been as a child to my sister Mrs. Stirling from her early years, and a pleasant child she was.

You will have heard also of the death of Lady Napier's daughter in the island of Madeira. "There is not a house where there is not one dead." Grey hairs and childhood meet together under that sentence—Ripeness is all. Oh let us give heed that we do not lose these things. Let us use them, and find meat that endureth unto eternal life in them. Where is your brother, and how is he? I am sorry to say that the last seeds he kindly sent me, the Deodara Cedar, have altogether failed; not one has sprung, although they looked most living-like. Tell me how you get on in your new house.

Our sister Christian went to Keir as soon as she heard the painful news. Remember them, and remember me, my dear friend. I am charged to find out a pastor for the parish of Monifieth. I wish to have the concurrence of the people. . . .—I remain ever yours, T. ERSKINE.

205. TO THOMAS CARLYLE, ESQ.

LINLATHEN, *Nov.* 8, 1843.

DEAR MR. CARLYLE,—I received the newspaper addressed by your hand as a testimony that you had survived the voyage to London in a capacity, so far, of discharging the duties of a human being. Soon after you left us a friend of mine, who would like to know you, and whom you, I think, would like to know, James Mackenzie, son of the "Man of Feeling," came here. I spoke to him of your purposed History of Oliver Cromwell, on which he recollected having read something rather characteristic of the said Oliver in the "Coltness Papers," published lately by the Maitland Club, and he promised when he went home to look out for the passage, and to send me the distinct reference, that I might transmit it to you to be used or abused according to your own judgment. He has

not only sent the reference, but transcribed the passage, which I enclose to you.[1] I think that there must have been a considerable self-evidencing power in Oliver's religion which could have in so short a time overcome the prejudices of the good lady of Alertown. His interest in the *maiger* young man and his recommendation of Montpellier are also good from a man who was not brought up in the kingly habit of buying and paying people by courteous words.

Hitherto our winter has been most gentle. Our trees are at this moment passing through a beautiful euthanasia, covering the ground with rich mosaic. We expect our sister, Mrs. Stirling, home to-day from her long absence at a house of mourning. This year has made more such houses in our circle of friends than usual. Give my best regards to Mrs. Carlyle, and believe me to be yours most truly, T. ERSKINE.

206. EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS TO MADAME DE STAËL.

Sept. 20, 1843.

. . . YOU mistake my character very much if you suppose that I live free from the influence of visible things. I am continually called to act amongst them, and I feel it a continual and a most painful difficulty to determine what is the path of duty. I am thus often in a state of indecision, and very often also after having acted I condemn the choice I had made, and wish I had acted otherwise. You understand all the misery connected with such a temper. Indeed, it often makes me feel weary and heavy laden, and it also makes me feel how very little I realise the privilege of having Jesus as my head and counsellor and guide, and yet I know that He is indeed all these to me, and that

[1] "The Coltness Collections," pp. 9, 10, quoted in "Oliver Cromwell's Letters and Speeches," vol. ii. p. 272.

I shall one day be delivered from this bondage of corruption into the liberty wherewith the Son maketh free. The filial spirit, the Son's spirit, is the free spirit which enters into the Father's mind, and knows His will, and finds that will its food and joy. The time is short, our redemption draweth nigh; let us fight the good fight of faith, and take hold of eternal life, which indeed is nothing else than the loving will of our Father, during the few remaining days of our pilgrimage here.

207. TO MADAME DE STAËL.

Christmas 1843.

THE history of every family and of every individual is a deep tragedy; for sin is in the world, and there is no other deliverance from sin but by the way of sorrow—sorrow administered by love and received in love. So that this life is given up to the development of the sacred mystery of sorrow. It is by sorrow that God calls the prodigal to think of his true home, and it is by sorrow that He perfects His saints. The Son of God, when He became the Son of Man, became also the Man of Sorrows, and it is by participation in His sorrows that He would lead the children of men into a participation of His divine nature, and thus make them in spirit the children of God. And so, when we communicate with each other, it is chiefly to tell of sorrows. But we must take care not to lose sight of the blessed purpose of sorrow. We see the fulfilment of that purpose in Jesus, and the glorious result to which it conducted Him is an encouragement to us to receive it ourselves, and to see it in others with patient hopefulness. This history is an abridgment of that of the race, considered as the sequel of the history of the first Adam. But we have need of faith.

. . . WHEN we feel pain or uneasiness in our bodies, we naturally refer it to some internal malady, and we look out for a remedy which may remove it. But when we feel pain or uneasiness in our minds we are disposed to refer it, not to any malady in the mind itself, but to the circumstances in which we are placed, and thus men are employed rather in attempting to change their circumstances than in endeavouring to cure their souls.

208. TO M. CRAMER MALLET.

LINLATHEN, *Dec.* 26, 1843.

MY DEAR FRIEND,— . . . All through Europe the lower classes of the people have learned that they have rights; but they have not yet learned that the real political good of man is to be well governed, and not self-governed. They suppose that these two things are one. The gospel that they would desire is, Every man his own king; and that other gospel which is next neighbour to it, Every man his own God; whereas the true gospel is, You are not your own, but bought with a price. Submit yourselves to this rule. God's promised blessing to the world is a righteous king; see Isa. xxxii. and Ps. lxxii. and cx. . . .—Yours most truly, T. ERSKINE.

209. TO M. GAUSSEN.

LINLATHEN, DUNDEE, *April* 10, 1844.

MY DEAR FRIEND AND BROTHER,—You must think me very unmindful of all the friendship and love which I have received at your hands, if you judge of me by my irregularity in writing; but I hope that you do not so judge of me. I hope that you have confidence that I feel bound to you by a tie which cannot be broken—the eternal bond of God's love. I often go back in memory to Satigny, and

collect there many dear ones: your mother and sister and daughter, and Perrot and the young missionaries from the Bâle seminary, Miss Greene, and others who have gone hence. I see your venerable little church, surrounded with its *marronniers*. I walk in your garden, and look at your mountains and your river. Oh, my friend, what a privilege it is to know Him who is the Maker of all things as our Father and our God, who calls us to be partakers in His own nature, by receiving Jesus and walking in Him. I hope before long to see you again, but the state of our country at present makes me feel it to be my duty to remain at my own post. I take the liberty of sending this by a valued friend of mine, whom I have known long—Miss Stormonth; she is a great friend of Dr. Chalmers, and a follower of the Free Church movement, with which I have sympathy in its principle, but not in its mode of acting. I think you will like her.

What a desolate place Geneva seems now to me deprived of the dear Madame Cramer, Madame Vernet, Madame Necker! If you get this note, be kind and forgiving enough to write me. My irregularity has got into a habit, in consequence of the weakness of my eyes, in which you can sympathise.—Yours ever, T. ERSKINE.

210. TO THE REV. A. J. SCOTT.

LINLATHEN, *July* 22, 1844.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I feel it indeed a great disappointment not to meet you at this time. We had thought that you might have made out Perth, and then taken the steamer down the river; but I am quite sensible that any over-exertion might be attended with lamentable consequences. That you have yourself felt it a disappointment is at the same time gratifying and grievous. If it had been

possible, I wish you had been here this last week, during which we have enjoyed the refreshing babbling of that most amiable of men, James Mackenzie. I who weary of myself in other men's company, find myself always renovated and restored by his free natural current, which runs out of him like a child's prattle. If he has the same effect on you that he has on me, I think the prospect of benefit—even physical benefit—from his society might almost have outweighed the risk of a journey here. His tenderness of nature, his exquisite *loving* sense of the ludicrous, his *besoin* of uttering his thoughts and feelings, not to mention the infinity of his resources, in taste and intelligence of all sorts, and in personal anecdote, give a charm to him which I never saw in any one else.[1] He has got a beautiful day, I am glad to see, for his voyage home. So beautiful indeed does the weather look, that I feel tempted to take a run to Stirlingshire, where the beauty of the weather is met half-way by the beauty of the country, that I might shake hands with you again in our own country, before I leave Britain for an uncertain time. . . .—Ever yours,

T. ERSKINE.

211. TO MRS. MACHAR.

LINLATHEN, *May* 27, 1844.

THE present time is a very trying one. I did not feel myself called on to take any part in this movement (the Disruption), but I always expressed my conviction that the movement was one more of a political than of a religious character. God is Love. I feel that is what is wanted

[1] Yet another and deeper bond united these two friends. In 1824 they met at Rome. Mr. Mackenzie, then a gay and thoughtless youth, was prostrated by fever, and lay for weeks in a critical condition. Mr. Erskine's attentions were incessant. The happy fruit of them was an entire change in Mr. Mackenzie's thoughts and sentiments, and a perfect spiritual harmony ever after between them.

universally. I desire to have my own heart ever filled out of that fountain; it is a love which rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; but most assuredly it is not the true love if it forgets tenderness towards those whom we think in error.

212. TO DR. WYLIE OF CARLUKE.

. . . THE great body of the people here have followed Mr. Miller[1] out of the Church, rather (I believe) on the ground that he is a good man, and making a sacrifice for conscience' sake, than on any personal convictions of their own that the principle on which he acts is right. I believe, also, that it is generally felt that the rights of the people are asserted by the seceding ministers, which weighs a good deal. The letters from your elders are most touching. I hope there are many such people in the ranks of the Secession; but I scarcely think that in this county, at least in the rural parts of it, such are to be found. And as they are most touching even to me, who know nothing of the writers, they must be heart-breaking to you. I am surprised that men like these should have allowed an outward thing to acquire such importance in their eyes.

[1] The Rev. Mr. Miller of Monifieth.

CHAPTER II.

Letters from the Continent—1844-46.

In the autumn of 1844 the establishment at Linlathen was temporarily broken up. The experiment had been tried of making it the home of Mr. Erskine's two sisters as well as his own. The state however of Mrs. Paterson's health had become such that this idea was now finally given up, she and her husband going in search of a warmer climate. Mrs. Stirling was prepared to part with her jointure-house of Cadder and live permanently at Linlathen. Ere setting up the new *régime* over which she was for many years so happily to preside, her brother took her on a visit to the Continent. Partly owing to her being with him and taking share in the home correspondence, and still more to the letters written at this time by Mr. Erskine to his "dear Cousin Rachel" having been destroyed, there are but few letters of this period to present.

Rome was reached in the beginning of winter, and soon after his arrival Mr. Erskine received a communication from Lausanne in which he was specially interested. The relations betwixt the civil authorities and the Church of the Canton de Vaud had become so complicated that on the 11th November 1844 M. Vinet addressed a letter to the Council of State, informing them that he would feel him-

self obliged at the end of the year to resign the office of Professor of Practical Theology in the Academy of Lausanne. Writing to Mr. Erskine to inform him of this resolution, after referring to a chronic malady of his son which shut up against him any public career, M. Vinet says:—

"Et moi qui ai une carrière, je me vois sur le point d'être contraint de la quitter. Ma place de professeur m'impose des fonctions qui impliquent la reconnaissance du système ecclésiastique qui régit depuis cinq ans l'église nationale de ce pays, et contre lequel j'ai protesté en renonçant à ma qualité de membre du clergé. Or je le suis encore par un bout, et je ne puis le rester sans avoir à me reprocher une inconséquence que personne, je le crains, n'expliquerait à l'honneur de mon désintéressement ou de la fermeté de mes convictions. Il est bon de vous dire, bien cher monsieur, que ma démission de membre du clergé national est indépendante de mon système sur l'église et l'état, et que, quand je croirais à la légitimité de cette union, je ne m'en séparerais pas moins d'un gouvernement ecclésiastique et d'une loi dont le principe est cyniquement matérialiste. Il est fâcheux, pour moi du moins, qu'en sécularisant la faculté de théologie, on ait, par mégarde peut-être, laissé pendre à nos charges de professeurs un lambeau d'attributions ecclésiastiques qui font de nous, malgré nous, malgré moi du moins, des fonctionnaires de l'église; mais la chose est ainsi: je ne puis la changer. Ce n'est pas tout: avant que la loi fût faite, avant que mon livre fût écrit, moins d'une année après mon entrée en charge, j'avais conçu des doutes pénibles sur ma vocation au professorat de théologie. . . .

"Laissez-moi vous dire combien je dois à un livre qui vient de vous, quoique vous ne me l'ayez pas envoyé: 'The brazen serpent. (Le serpent d'airain.)' Que de choses qu'il me semble avoir toujours pensées! Oh! s'il m'était donné de

sentir avec vous comme il m'a été donné de penser avec vous![1] . . .

"Voilà mon papier rempli et mon cœur n'est pas vidé. Il ne s'y passe rien, ni dans ma tête non plus, que je ne voulusse vous dire. Surtout je voudrais vous entendre."

213. TO M. VINET.

CORSO, ROME, *Dec.* 28, 1844.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—In reading over your most interesting letter, the only comfort that presented itself to me was that "not a sparrow falleth to the ground without our Father," and that "the hairs of your head are all numbered," and so utterly unhelpful did I feel myself, that I did not like even to answer you, but thought that, like Job's friends at their first meeting him, I should sit silent beside you. But though I cannot give you any light or strength to guide and sustain you, I can give you a brother's sympathy, and I can present your burden along with my own to Him who has said, "Cast your burden on the Lord, and He will sustain you." It is indeed a most complicated case of sorrow and perplexity—your poor position, the feeling that consistency requires you to give up your professorship, yet knowing that it is just the place for which your faculties and character fit you, and that in it you have more apparent opportunity of doing good than in any other;—all this aggravated by a nervous state of body, affecting your mind. I cannot venture to suggest anything, except this—that if your conviction that you ought to renounce your chair arises from the apprehension that *others may think* that your continuing to hold it is the result of a mercenary feeling in you, and not from a distinct perception of the

[1] Quoted in the preceding volume, p. 385, and repeated here because of the reference to it in Mr. Erskine's reply.

rightness of such a step in your own conscience, you should take means to ascertain whether such a feeling in others does exist to any extent. I could not wish you to remain for a moment in any situation where you could not look straight up to God, but I should be sorry that you left a situation in which He has placed you, from any other fear than that of opposing His will.

I am very thankful that you have got any good out of the "Brazen Serpent." During the time that I wrote it I was conscious of communion with God in my own spirit; and whether the view which I take of the history be just or not, I believe that it contains much of the meaning of Christianity. I think that I was mistaken in my impressions as to the appearances of the spiritual gifts; but that is of very little consequence, and perhaps my chief error in the book is that I give too much importance to them. I shall be delighted to receive the new edition of your discourses, having found them already helpful to me, and always finding your friendship, and every expression of it, a precious gift from the Giver of all good. I am also pleased that you have chosen such an occupation as the translation of à Kempis, the humility and meekness and heavenly-mindedness of the book are so true and living.

Look at the 20th of Proverbs, verse 14—"It is naught, it is naught, saith the buyer; but when he goeth forth, then he boasteth." The buyer of the pearl of great price is obliged to sell all to buy it, and in doing so he is often tempted to think that he is giving too much for it, but when he goeth forth out of the darkness of time into the light of eternity, then he *boasteth*; he feels that he would have bought the pearl cheap had he paid ten times as much. "Wherefore is there a price in the hand of a fool to buy wisdom, and he hath no heart for it?" Affliction is the price oftener put into our hand to make this purchase.

Let us buy the pearl, dear friend, and we shall hereafter count the price paid for it a thing which we might be glad to get quit of—for what is it but our *independent will* desiring to take God's place? Let us take what He appoints for us, accepting our punishment—like the thief on the cross—for are we not all on the cross? And we have only to choose whether we are to profit by it or not. Give my affectionate regards to Madame Vinet. My sister joins me.—Yours most truly, T. ERSKINE.

After passing the winter in Rome, Mr. Erskine and his sister travelled by a circuitous route to Geneva, which they reached early in October.

214. TO THE REV. J. M'LEOD CAMPBELL.

GENEVA, 21*st October* 1845.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—I have found Geneva much changed from what it was when I was last here. My old friends are most of them dead—four heads of families—but I have been received by their children in the most affectionate manner; there is something most touching in this inheritance of love; the God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob; the parents were all of them pious, and their remembrance is connected with piety in the hearts of the children, and much promise of fruit appears.

What a sweet holy memory have the two dear Patersons[1] (Margaret and Augusta) left behind them, and dear Mrs. Duncan. He, I understand, is returned; when you write to him, tell him and his sister that we never lose thought of them.

We propose to leave this place in three or four days to go southward. Rome is our destination for the winter.

[1] Captain Paterson's sisters.

. . . We have met with many persons and events that have been channels to us of voices from God. Pray for us that our ears may be open.

I was much struck the other day by what a lady told me of herself in relation to her mother who is now dead. She said that often, although she lived at some distance from her mother's house, yet even when she had something pressing to do, she used to go out of her way to go up her mother's stair, just to get a look of her and from her, as if to get strength and comfort to carry her through her business. And shall not we seek our Father's looks to comfort and strengthen us on our journey? You may suppose that we feel rather widowed by the separation of the Patersons from our party; and my sister's eyes seem to be beginning to fail too, which makes us more helpless than we used to be. Remember us and ask for us that we may enter into the purpose of our Father in what He appoints for us.

215. TO MADAME FOREL.

FLORENCE, *29th Nov.* 1845.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—Many thanks for your book, which I have read with great interest. I think that it is calculated to be useful to many, the true state of a Christian in his daily walk with God in the inner man of the heart, is so fully and constantly recognised in it, and all departures from that state are so thoroughly condemned as sins. We are so apt, through indolence, to form a low standard of Christianity to ourselves, and to hope that all is well with us, whilst we are not directly offending against a law of God in our thoughts and desires, although we are not entering heartily into His purpose with regard to ourselves and others, nor endeavouring to be fellow-workers with Him in that purpose—we are so apt thus to fall asleep,

that it is good for us to hear the voice of a brother-man deploring and condemning things in himself as grievous sins, which we may have been allowing to pass unreproved in ourselves, and thus to be led to consider whether we have not been voluntarily permitting ourselves to fall asleep in the midst of our course. There is an English book written by one John Foster, a Baptist lately dead, containing many profound and striking thoughts; one of the subjects treated is "on a man's writing memoirs of himself." In this essay he supposes the man to go through the whole journey of his life, and to note at each stage any conviction or habit or taste which he had acquired there in his advance forward, and to consider what it was that had been the direct occasion of his making this acquisition. The writer remarks here, how often, when we came to the conclusion, we should find on this review that the casual meeting with a fellow-creature, for whom, perhaps, we had no great respect, and whom we never saw but once, or the reading of a book which on the whole we disapproved of, and had not read again, had left indelible impressions on our character, whilst we had felt little influence from the presence of a Being whose relation to us was that of an ever present, ever loving, ever counselling Father, of whose wisdom we never presumed to doubt. I remember reading that essay when I was seventeen or eighteen years of age, and feeling the truth of it very much; I felt how life was necessarily a progressive education of our character either for good or for evil, and that the responsibility connected with this our position was of such a solemn and overpowering weight that a continual receiving of help from on high was essential to our success, and a continual looking to God for that help was our first duty and our chief privilege. I determined also to keep a journal of my own history, but I gave it up, feeling that I did not do it *truly*.

. . . I am here at Florence enjoying the works of art very much. There are some beautiful frescos by Beato Angelico di Fiesole, which have given me special gratification, and edification also I should say; his pictures express the humility and the heavenly aspirations of a devout soul, far more than any paintings I ever saw; it is said that he never began to paint without praying for guidance and help. How profitable should we all be one to another if we thus did everything in the spirit of prayer; we should then be fulfilling God's purpose in creating us *after His own image*. . . . May the Lord be with you, dear friends.—Yours most affectionately, T. ERSKINE.

In the Tyrolese Bavaria, in a miserable little village inn on the borders of the Tegernsee, Mr. Erskine had in the preceding summer found an English gentleman, Mr. Wagner, lying with his leg dreadfully shattered, the carriage in which he and his family had been travelling having been overturned. Mr. Erskine remained some days with them, sympathising most tenderly, giving such help as he could, becoming acquainted with Dr. Foster and his wife, a daughter of Jean Paul Richter, who were living in the neighbourhood.[1]

216. TO MR. WAGNER.

64 VIA SISTINA, ROMA, *Jan.* 9, 1846.

MY DEAR SIR,—I hope this letter will find you progressing onwards towards a perfect recovery. . . . Will you ask Miss Wagner, with my best regards, to let (Madame Foster) Richter's daughter know that I appreciate most highly the kindness of her intention of sending me her father's portrait, but that I entirely coincide with her husband's opinion that it ought not to go out of the family.

[1] Wagner" (Cambridge, 1858), pp. 77, 78.

In fact, though I should have rejoiced to have received it as an expression of love, yet I should also have rejoiced to have sent it back as an act of justice. Let her be told this, with my true heart-felt love, for such I bear her; and I shall remember her and my interview with her on the sweet shores of Tegernsee. . . .

217. TO MADAME DE STAËL.

ROME, *Jan.* 1846.

I BELIEVE that we should seek to have, and to be satisfied with, the sympathy of Christ; that is, the sympathy which strengthens and girds up the loins of the heart, whilst it gladdens. We need tonics to fit us for our life-battle—not emollients. Yet I find it an evil thing for me to live with those who can give me no sympathy, however good and worthy they may be; for they teach me to lock up my heart and all its feelings, which produces spiritual congestion, as bad for the soul as the congestion of blood is in any bodily organ. I know the value of Mrs. Rich as a sympathiser. I have sympathised with her, and been sympathised with by her, and I know that her love rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth (1 Cor. xiii. 6), which gives sympathy its right tonic quality. I am persuaded that there are many hearts that contain much sympathy, as the rock contains the water, without giving any sign of its presence until smitten by Moses' rod. . . .

218. TO MRS. BURNETT.

CARLSBAD, *July* 13, 1846.

I CAN see no possible, reasonable, and enduring peace for any human being in this world, except in the conviction that everything which happens in this world is appointed

or permitted with a purpose of love to every one. It is a large school, and there are many scholars, and we are trained through each other. The parent is educated through the child, and the child through the parent; but the great fatherly Teacher sees and orders all, and does not permit that the education of the one should be at the expense of the other. A man injures me either by hurting my feelings or by evil suggestions, and counsel, and example, or by that general unsympathising manner which closes, or rather which has a tendency to close up my heart. There is an education to him through what he sees and meets with in me in consequence of his conduct to me, and there is an education to me also. I am conscious that I have conducted myself often towards different individuals in a way which appeared likely to deteriorate or injure their characters, and to turn them from God; and the thought would be intolerable if I did not really believe that God was watching over all, and that He permitted this in such a way as to make my bad or unwise conduct an important part of the education of those individuals. This does not and ought not to prevent self-condemnation, but it gives light with regard to consequences. I find an ocean of unfathomed comfort in that word, "He hath included them all in unbelief, that He might have mercy on all." Many things appear, and are, irretrievable to us, but there is nothing irretrievable with God.[1] This is a great gospel to my heart. He who knows how to take occasion from the fall to bring in the redemption, may be safely trusted with each event, and with every action, good or bad. I believe that love reigns, and that love will prevail. I believe that He says to me every morning, "Begin again thy journey and thy life;" thy sins, which are many, are not only forgiven, but they shall be made by the wisdom of God the basis on which

[1] A favourite and oft-repeated saying.

He will build blessings." Beloved friend, lift up your head, and hear Him who says, "All power is committed unto me in heaven and earth;" therefore let us not fear, but rest assured that for all these things we shall yet magnify His great and glorious name. It becomes us to go mourning, but let us mourn in an assured hope that He will overcome evil with good.

CHAPTER III.

Letters from 1847 till 1852.

THOSE autumn receptions at Linlathen which began in 1847 were continued almost uninterruptedly for the next twenty years. They owed much to the delicate tact and graceful courtesy of Mrs. Stirling. Speaking of her after her death in 1866, Professor Jowett, a frequent guest at Linlathen, says :—"I have always felt that Mrs. Stirling had a great hold on all who knew her. Besides her goodness and excellent sense, she had a quick perception of character, and a sort of quiet amusement in things that struck her, which made her conversation very pleasant." However varied were the elements around, she had the happy art of blending them into harmony. Her brother's gentle geniality and loving sense of the ludicrous rendered her task the easier. M'Leod Campbell, in August 1847, having written to Mr. Erskine to ask whether it would be convenient to receive his brother and son at Linlathen, got the following prompt reply :—

219. TO THE REV. J. M'LEOD CAMPBELL.

LINLATHEN, 11*th August* 1847.

DONALD will be most welcome, for his own sake and for your sake. I like to keep up my acquaintance with the succeeding generation.

Mr. Maurice will be no hindrance, I hope, to the coming

of your brother and Major Dalzell. I have given up the idea of sorting people—

> Mingle, mingle, mingle,
> Mingle as they may.

I leave it to the master of the music to arrange them.

T. ERSKINE.

220. TO MADAME FOREL.

May 18, 1847.

DEAR FRIEND,—I have heard of Vinet's death, and desire to know the circumstances of it, and I apply to you as one able and willing to give the information, and also to tell me how poor Mme. Vinet is. It seems strange to me to think that he is no longer in this world, whom I had regarded since I first knew him, as an instrument that God had fashioned and fitted for a great and much-needed work amongst those who spoke his language,—it seems strange, for he has left his work not half finished according to our apprehensions; but God knows His own way. The work is His, and He knows how it is to be accomplished. Vinet was indeed a remarkable man—remarkable for large-mindedness and humble-mindedness, rendering to God the glory of His gifts. He was a great gift himself from God to his country and to his age; for such men, such apostolical prophetic men, are indeed God's most precious gifts. His chief gift was the man-God Jesus Christ, and His gifts next in value are men filled with the spirit of Jesus. What a consolation to all who knew his value, and especially to those who, like you, had the high privilege of being intimate with him, and experiencing the genuineness and tenderness of his friendship! I have always regarded his friendship as one of my most precious possessions, gratifying to my feelings and profitable to my soul, calling me from all low and worldly thoughts to the

pursuit of what was imperishable. Dear Madame Vinet, what a blow to her! May the Lord be her stay and her consolation! Indeed, where else is there help in any circumstances? But Vinet was in such a special manner the life, and pride, and head of his family, and friends also, that I cannot help thinking of them as sheep without a shepherd. . . .—Yours most truly, T. ERSKINE.

221. TO MADAME FOREL.

LINLATHEN, *June* 21, 1847.

DEAR MADAME,—I regret having been so tardy in getting any information for you with regard to the translating and publishing of M. Vinet's works in this country. . . . I was much touched by dear Mme. Vinet's letter; there can be but few losses like hers, because there are so few men like him in the world. Such a combination of mental power and Christian character is the rarest of all things. I look round me in vain for anything like it. There is only one support under such an affliction, but, blessed be God, that is a sufficient one, viz., that it has been appointed by a wise love which watched over him with fatherly solicitude, and chose the events for him which were best fitted to advance his eternal welfare. That same love watches over her and her son, and all the mourning friends who are left behind, and chooses for them their tasks and their crosses. Is not broken body and shed blood the supper of our Lord? showing us that it is by that which breaks the flesh and sheds out the blood of man's will that our souls are to be trained and nourished unto eternal life; and shall we not say likewise, "The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" Give my affectionate brotherly regards to her. I loved her husband, and feel his memory a sacred thing. Pray remember me most kindly and respectfully to M. F., and

believe me to be, dear Madame, with much regard, yours most truly, T. ERSKINE.

222. TO MRS. MACNABB.

LINLATHEN, DUNDEE, *Dec.* 11, 1847.

DEAR MRS. MACNABB,—You may know that death has been doing his work within our circle lately. Miss Graham of Airth, my mother's eldest remaining sister, eighty-four years of age, died last week. A fine old specimen of natural character and life, and one whom I remember from the earliest dawn, a vigorous clear-eyed woman, capable of being a martyr for any good cause, full of affection moreover, and full of old traditions and memories, which are now to be forgotten by all men. . . . With affectionate regards to Mr. Macnabb, I remain, yours most lovingly,

T. ERSKINE.

223. TO MADAME FOREL.

LINLATHEN, 25*th April* 1848.

DEAR MADAME,—When I write to you or to any Christian friend at present, I am led to realise strongly that in the midst of all the confusion and tumult which cover the face of Europe there is still a sphere of peace and safety, inaccessible to any violence, in which those who trust in God may dwell securely, and delight to remember that all things must work together for good to those who love God; and even more than this, that all things are so overruled, that finally the earth, now so full of sin and misery, shall be full of the knowledge and glory of God, as the waters cover the sea. The hope of the final restoration, even of those who are now wandering farthest from God, is to me a most precious hope. It is a hope also in perfect harmony with the great principle that we must eat of the fruit of our own doings, for I believe that no mortal being can ever rise out of misery except by rising out of sin, and that none can

rise out of sin except by partaking in Christ's death; that is, by accepting the due punishment, and by ceasing from their own will, and living in the divine will.

I cannot look on France without many anticipations of evil, of the recurrence perhaps of the atrocities of the old Revolution; for in case of a collision between the moderate and the communists and ultras, and even the temporary victory of the latter, dark deeds would inevitably be done; and you see how contagious the spirit is—the spirit of selfishness and insubordination. I remember, in the year 1838, dear M. Vinet told me that there would probably soon be political movements in the Canton de Vaud. I said, "Where every man is an elector, and every man is eligible to any office in the state, what ground can there be for a political movement?" He answered, "It is not enough for them to be eligible, they wish, every one, to be elected." . . . Present my best regards to M., etc.—Yours most truly, T. ERSKINE.

224. TO THOMAS CARLYLE, ESQ.

LINLATHEN, 1*st June* 1848.

MY DEAR MR. CARLYLE,—I have read your articles with the wish that you had some steady organ through which you might converse with the people of these countries periodically. I am sure it would be most healthful for many, and they would receive from you what they would refuse from any other. . . . Is it not altogether a most wretched delusion to suppose that a half or quarter civilised people should be legislated for and treated as if they were civilised? England is to be blamed doubtless for selfishness in her dealings towards them in time past, but not for the assumption of authority, which is just what they need, were it only wise. After all, I have an apprehension that there is something in their blood, which will

make self-government in Ireland as hopeless as in Hayti. Mr. Combe, the phrenologist, was here yesterday; he spoke of the Irish as being generally characterised in their physical organisation by a want of conscientiousness, of discernment of consequences, and of caution, and by the presence of a redundant combativeness and destructiveness, to a degree that made him conceive that it would require many generations under the best moral training to fit them for what is called free government. I think there is much truth in Mr. Combe's deliverance. What do you think of this curious heroico-pathetic scene at the conviction of John Mitchell —for madness, I should say, still more than for felony? We must look to God for a fit man to take up all these loops; a strong-hearted and strong-headed man. I felt the kindness of sending me these papers very much. All good attend you and Mrs. Carlyle.—Yours ever truly,

T. ERSKINE.

225. TO MR. G. GALLOWAY.[1]

LINLATHEN, *June* 1848.

DEAR FRIEND,—I am much gratified by your writing to me at this strange time. The thoughts of any earnest intelligent man could never be without interest to me at any time, but now when there is a universal shaking of all old recognised foundations, I feel especial interest in listening to any utterance in reference either to the causes or the remedies of these movements that seems to proceed from a true feeling or a true insight. It is quite manifest that the reign of wisdom and righteousness is the only perfect government, and that a government is good or bad exactly as it approaches or recedes from that ideal; in the same

[1] A mason or housebuilder in Glasgow. "It was this George Galloway of whom Scott said, after being with me to see him, that he was one of the nobles of nature."—*Memorials of Dr. M'Leod Campbell*, vol. i. p. 275.

way as the inward government of a man's own heart is good or bad according as wisdom and righteousness rule within him or not; and freedom and good government mean the same thing. A man is free in his own spirit when that which ought to be uppermost in him is uppermost, and that is subject which ought to be subject, and such a free-man will desire to see the same freedom in the government of nations; but he will not dream of creating it by giving political power to those who are the slaves of pride, selfishness, passion, and appetite. Freedom is a moral state, and cannot be produced by mechanical contrivances. Like you, I cannot separate between religion and politics.

I believe that society and all its combinations is intended by God to form a school for the education of the individual in likemindedness to Jesus Christ, and that no law is rightly framed which does not originate in this purpose; and thus I regret all social and political revolutions as most speaking advertisements to men and to nations that they have not yet found the right principle of combination.

The communists have a distorted idea of the true thing; they see that there ought to be a common interest, but they wish to have the works of love without the principle of love. Poor fellows, I don't wonder at their zeal; oh that they saw the meaning of their own inarticulate cry! and that other political sects, radicals, chartists, etc., would but consider what self-government really consists in, and would set about having it and practising it in good earnest, and that they would learn to see and acknowledge the hand of God in the formation and ordering of society, for thus they would without a feeling of degradation give reverence to authorities and institutions; but this, through blindness to God—practical atheism—they have lost, and in it they have lost the only principle of union which can stand; for

true brotherly love supposes the acknowledgment of a common Father. Spiritual order is the mark toward which we should be continually aiming, within and without. This is liberty, and this only—the liberty wherewith Christ maketh free. Peace be with you.—Yours truly,

T. ERSKINE.

226. TO LORD RUTHERFURD.

LINLATHEN, *June* 29, 1848.

. . . THE technical conventionalities of our Scotch preaching seem to me to stifle all the religious life and sentiment of the country. People are partisans for election and reprobation—for Free Church or Established Church—and zealous partisans too: but I see little of yielding up the will to be a sympathising recipient of the Divine will, and I hear little preaching which makes that its object. My feeling on this matter reconciled me somewhat to the youth of Mr. Robertson; he is not hackneyed in that routine. I have made it a point of honour not to seek for a man who might symbolise with myself, in what might be called idiosyncrasies of mine. I have sought a man of earnest truth and ability. I hope this man is such, but he is untried.—Ever yours, T. ERSKINE.

227. TO THE SAME.

LINLATHEN, DUNDEE, *July* 2, 1848.

MY DEAR RUTHERFURD,—I have just returned from church, where I heard Mr. Robertson preach. He is a very remarkable man. I should not wonder at his being soon regarded as the first man in the Church of Scotland. He is quite original, and has that knowledge of the use and meaning of words which indicates and arises from the finest kind of intelligence. He looks above

thirty, and is at once self-possessed and unpresumptuous. I think him a rare man, and should grieve exceedingly at losing him. I shall send you testimonials as soon as I can get them—four or five good ones. . . .

My dear R., I am in Edinburgh for a few days, for this week at 8 Charlotte Square. What hours are you free? I hope to see something of you; to look backwards and forwards with you. I have been seeing poor Mackenzie. How many wrecks float around us, marking the track we have travelled by!—Yours ever, T. ERSKINE.

228. TO LORD RUTHERFURD.

LINLATHEN, *July* 14, 1848.

MY DEAR RUTHERFURD,—I am very thankful for this,[1] and I hope that those who have had the doing of it may receive God's blessing for it. I thank you for what was done for me, but I thank you much more for what was done for Right; and this last, I believe, really covers the whole,

[1] The appointment as minister of the parish of Mains and Strathmartin, of the Mr. Robertson spoken of in the preceding letter. Dr. Cannan, the former minister, having resigned the charge, a committee was appointed to look out for a successor. Mr. Erskine, who as principal heritor of Mains was a member of the committee, having had his attention directed to a young preacher recently licensed, suggested that he should be invited to preach in the neighbouring church of Liff. The other members of the committee who heard Mr. Robertson on that occasion being equally satisfied, Mr. Erskine undertook to bring his name before the Government, with whom the appointment lay. In this, owing to Mr. Rutherfurd's influence with Sir George Grey, he succeeded. After a ten years' ministry in Mains and Strathmartin, Mr. Robertson was in 1858 translated to be minister of the Cathedral Church of Glasgow. Here his health broke down, and he died in January 1865, not having completed the forty-first year of his age. His "Pastoral Counsels" and "Sermons and Expositions" abundantly verify the high estimate which Mr. Erskine had so early formed. The Dean of Westminster, in his "Essays on Church and State" (p. 254), speaks of the "Pastoral Addresses" as "an excellent volume, which, if the style had been equal to the matter, would have entitled their author to a high place amongst the theological writers of the age."

for your listening to me was simply the consequence of your conviction that I desired what was right, and in some measure could judge of it. I never expected any personal answer from Sir George Grey; in his circumstances it would be indeed unreasonable to expect it. I feel for him, and often pray for light and strength to him, as to one who needs them much. There surely is light and strength somewhere in an ocean-fountain; the scanty rills of them which we find in ourselves seem to indicate an infinite source from whence they come; and it is pleasant to find that source a personal Being—a Father—a Friend in whom we may trust, to whom we may pour out our hearts. You will come to this some day, my dear friend, and you will bless Him who has led you to Himself by whatever means. I, though most worthy of being neglected by Him, as I have so much neglected Him, have yet found Him a real helper and a real refuge.

I shall count on seeing you in autumn. You cannot think what a friendship your Irish friends have struck up with some of my people; and they have so deep an affection for Mrs. Rutherfurd, that I should expect some sympathy on the geometrical axiom—those that are equal to the same thing must be equal to one another.—Ever affectionately yours, T. E.

229. TO THE SAME.

LINLATHEN, DUNDEE, 29*th Aug.* 1848.

MY DEAR RUTHERFURD,—If you have anything to say with any one who has influence in the nomination of Professors in the London University, you may do a service to the cause of literature and true philosophy by recommending for the vacant chair of English Language and Literature my excellent and highly-gifted friend Mr. Scott. I once

took you to hear him deliver a lecture in the Marylebone Institution Hall, near Portman Square. I think it possible that some of your friends may be influential men in relation to that University; if so, and if your interest is not already preoccupied by some other candidate, I would earnestly ask your help. You may have the fullest confidence in recommending him, for he is a first-class man, high both in faculty and in acquirement. I hope you won't think that you have spoilt me by your kindness in the Mains business, and that now there will be no end of me. I propose this because I know that it would be a good service to your country, and a grace to thee, as well as a living vocation to a noble character, that seems almost lost at present for want of a constant and adequate object.[1] "Spirits are not finely touched but for fine issues;" and yet these issues seem slow of coming, for lack of material opportunity.—Ever affectionately and gratefully yours, T. E.

230. TO THOMAS CARLYLE, ESQ.

LINLATHEN, *1st May* [1849].

DEAR MR. CARLYLE,—I am ashamed of having been so long of acknowledging the many proofs of your kindly remembrance which have reached me in the shape of *Examiners* and *Spectators* from time to time. Many thanks for them. I have read your articles with much interest and sympathy, and I wish you God-speed in your endeavours to stimulate and help our rulers in the great Irish difficulty. O for a man! That is what is wanted, and it appears to be wanted all over Europe—Democrats and Legitimists—all wanting a man. May God send him soon. Besides Ireland, what think you of our West Indian colonies for a

[1] In November 1848 Mr. Scott received the appointment here alluded to. See Appendix No. I.

change?—exhibiting the results of perhaps the most insane legislation of which the world has seen an example—down with slavery, up with slave sugar! What think you of Rush and Hudson? Are they not ominous signs of the times—like the Duc de Praslin and Teste, the forerunners of the French overturn? I have not had a letter from you since that great earthquake, which has shaken all the nations, and is still shaking them. It has been a sort of stethoscopising, trying whether the vital organs were in a sound state; the discoveries made have certainly been rather unpleasant. I fear for our own lungs, although we have survived hitherto, but the increasing mass of idle, reckless, ragged blackguardism that shows itself on all our roads is a fearful symptom. In short, the disease is alarming, and the doctors do not appear to know what to do. Beloved fellow-men, what is to come out of it? There is One who said with power, "Come out of the man, thou unclean spirit." No other Healer will do for us. Is not that true, good sir?

Notwithstanding all these things (which, after all, we shall leave behind us in the course of a very few years), how have you and Mrs. Carlyle passed this winter and spring? Have you been solacing yourselves in the country, or satisfying yourself with Hyde Park and your back garden? I often, in thought, walk down Cheyne Row and look in upon you. Our weather is just beginning to relent, and the buds and leaves are coming forth as if there were no sin in the world. . . .—Yours, with much love,

T. ERSKINE.

Your friend Mazzini seems to have made a mess of it in Italy. He will be hanged yet some day, honest man! Let me have a line from you giving a good account of yourself and friends.

231. TO THOMAS CARLYLE, ESQ.

LINLATHEN, *22d August* 1849.

MY DEAR MR. CARLYLE,—If you are indeed limited in your choice of days by this present week, I beseech you to come instanter on the receipt of this notification, Mrs. Carlyle and you, there being all needful accommodation; but if you could borrow a few days from next week, we would say Monday, not at all for our own convenience, but that I might make more sure of a friend of mine whom I had by anticipation invited to meet you whenever you might come, namely, James Mackenzie, a most genial man, who, you may remember, desired me to call your attention to some doings of Oliver in the upper ward of Lanarkshire, as recorded in one of the Bannatyne books. Mrs. Carlyle wrote that you were in Ireland under the conduct of one of the insurgents, and I am anxious to have your report, whether you saw any glimpse of hope for that poor country. I am glad to hear that Mrs. C. herself has been gathering health and strength in Scotland—a little more strength to meet a little more exhaustion. Is not that the way of it until it is all over? You have still a mother to meet and part with. It is a wonderful manifestation. I had by this very day's post a letter from a friend enclosing a note from his mother, just that I might see under what an outpouring of affection he lived and moved in this world. And have we not all a real parent, though invisible, who is father and mother in one? not confined either to Haddington or Ecclefechan. I hope you may long possess yours, as I grieve for Mrs. Carlyle's loss of hers, she seemed to need her so much.

Well, we shall expect you every day from this Wednesday forward, until we see you or hear from you, . . . and with real love from all of us to you and your good lady, I remain yours faithfully, T. ERSKINE.

After nearly three years' constant residence at Linlathen, the winter, spring, and summer months of 1849-50 were passed in Paris. Writing to Mrs. Burnett on the 10th January 1850, Mrs. Stirling says—

"The cold here is extreme. To-day I can scarcely hold my pen. The streets are black with frost, but whenever the sun does get out, we see it, and feel its cheering influence. Mercifully my sister has kept free of cough, but she looks very delicate. My brother's appearance is much improved, and I think his general health is also improved. . . . We have enough of visitors, but not too many. We see dear Mme. de Staël, Adolphe Monod, and some other French friends, and we see Lady Trotter and her daughter, Lady Elgin and her daughter, and some others. We see Plymouth Brethren, Irvingites, Roman Catholics, Puseyites, and Evangelicals. We see much to admire and love in all, and much to weep over also. Madame de Staël and Adolphe Monod are quite evidently seeking first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and are deeply solemnised by the aspect of the times."

The only letter of this period from Mr. Erskine that has been preserved is the following:—

232. TO M. CRAMER MALLET.

ST. GERMAIN-EN-LAYE, 25 *Juin* 1850.

CHER AMI,—Si nous avions la faculté de nous transporter par la volonté seule, nous nous trouverions bientôt auprès de vous; mais dans ce beau temps, quand la nature et même nos sensations nous poussent vers un pays où les lacs et les montagnes offrent perpétuellement l'espoir de la fraîcheur, la difficulté de voyager s'augmente beaucoup, surtout pour les personnes âgées et dont les forces s'épuisent par la chaleur. Je voudrois bien encore voir votre

intérieur de famille, changé, comme il doit être, par le développement du caractère de vos filles, et par le progrès des autres membres de la famille. Nous devons tous avancer dans le bon chemin. Le tems s'avance, et l'importante œuvre de la vie doit aussi s'avancer. Nous avons passé plus que six mois au milieu de cette capitale de la civilisation Européenne, une civilisation qui ne reconnaît pas Dieu, et paraît ne pas être reconnue par lui. Il y a un caractère de superficialité empreint sur toutes les manifestations de cette nation gaie et légère, qui la distingue de la nôtre, qui même dans son impiété paraît sérieuse. J'espère que le besoin de Dieu, et d'une communication avec lui, se fera senti dans toutes les nations à présent. Le besoin de quelque chose est senti, mais l'interprète qui peut expliquer les cris de la nature ne se trouve pas. Que Dieu envoie de vrais apôtres.

Je suis bien aise d'entendre vos bonnes nouvelles du caractère de votre gendre. Où demeurent-ils? Il nous ferait grand plaisir de vous voir chez nous cette été; nous espérons y être après le milieu du mois de Juillet. Amenez Clémentine, et en passant par Paris, arrangez qu'elle voie la maison des Diaconesses sous la direction de M. le Pasteur Vermeil. Nous pourrions facilement recevoir toute la famille.

J'ai vu un peu M. Adolphe Monod, un homme aimable et estimable, et admirable par ses talents. La position de l'Eglise me paraît extrêmement mauvaise ici comme chez vous. Chaque Pasteur doit avoir son propre troupeau, alors les relations du Pasteur et troupeau pourroient exister. À présent elles n'existent pas, qui est un mal énorme. Je crois que M. Monod avait raison, quand il décidait rester dans l'église établie, et pourtant les difficultés que rencontre un pasteur fidèle dans les circonstances actuelles sont bien affreuses. . . .

T. ERSKINE.

233. TO LORD RUTHERFURD.

44 LOWNDES STREET, *5th Jan.* 1851.

MY DEAR RUTHERFURD,—Ever welcome and gratifying to me are your words of kindness, expressive of thoughts and feelings ripened and hallowed by the growth of more than forty years. I rejoice to hear that you are restored to so much of your former strength, to as much certainly as will enable you to do good service on the bench, and as much as is well worth the sacrifice of some old indulgences to maintain. Last year at this time I scarcely expected so much, and although it may be said of human life in all circumstances that it is a gift from above, and is then only rightly used when the purpose of the Giver is taken as the rule of its use, I should say that this is more emphatically true in your case than it is in general. I wish you had been the head of one of the Courts, but the headship of right is more efficient than the headship of office, and whether you have the official headship or not it will be tacitly conceded to you if you do not demand it. I grieve exceedingly for dear Mrs. Rutherfurd; her strength just lasted as long as your condition required it, and yet I trust much in what you say of the elasticity of her mind communicating itself to her body. I think that I see something of the same kind in my sister Mrs. Paterson's case, who really seems to be gaining now, after an attenuation and exhaustion from which I feared that she could never have rallied. . . . What a strange prospect for Europe, and especially for France! I daresay you have read Louis Napoleon's *brochure* published in 1839 on the development of his uncle's ideas. I have not read it, as I seldom read anything; but I have heard those who have read it speak of it as showing a good deal of talent and a purpose of good, socially and politically, which ought, being

once expressed by him, to serve as a sort of guarantee for his conduct now. He has also written on pauperism, so that his mind seems prepared for government. National education and national pauperism are the great subjects for our European statesmen, and chiefly for our own statesmen, and a sufficient statesman in these respects would be one of the best gifts of Heaven. I wish your friend Sir George Grey had an inspiration for these things. I do not regret Lord Palmerston, much as I estimate his talent. Now, my dear Rutherfurd, this is a shabby return for your most interesting letter, but you must remember the difference between us, and accept me as I am.—Ever affectionately yours, T. ERSKINE.

234. TO LORD RUTHERFURD.

LINLATHEN, 29*th March* 1851.

MY DEAR DEAR RUTHERFURD,— . . . Of course I am interested in hearing how you get on with Gorgias, and how you like it. It is an argument against which Voltaire might have successfully written another Candide, and yet Leibnitz's principle in the Théodicée, with reasonable modifications, and Plato's in the Gorgias, will, I am persuaded, form a part of the creed of the most thinking and most conscientious part of mankind. Both Socrates and Voltaire laughed, but what different laughs! Voltaire thought of nothing but of pulling down what was wrong, and he did so much really good and useful work in this way, that he did not feel the necessity of building up. He was satisfied with negation; that is to say, negation with him was so active an employment that he did not come to feel that in itself it is a vacuum, and can satisfy no one. There is something irresistibly comical in the levity with which he treats the gravest principles—it is like a child pulling off an old man's wig; whereas dear Socrates has such a deep and true ven-

eration for everything that is really right in principle, he feels that without it man and the universe are nothing more than a dust-storm.

235. TO MRS. BURNETT.

44 LOWNDES ST., *18th Feb.* 1852.

MY DEAR COUSIN,— . . . There is something marvellous in the difference of the lots appointed to different persons. We somehow or other know more people here than we know in Edinburgh, so that we have a constant succession of visitors of all varieties, to the great wear and tear both of mind and body, and yet with a great interest. The duty of bearing one another's burdens is a wholesome exercise to the spirit in such circumstances, preserving from dissipation and distraction in the midst of the tumult. Yesterday I met with a clergyman who read me a letter addressed by 360 Italian peasants to a deputy of their own, whom they had sent to London to inquire into the condition of the Church of England, and to see whether they could enter into brotherly relations with it. The letter was written in a wise and temperate spirit. These people were Lombards, chiefly from the Venetian territory. There is also, as you probably know, a great movement towards the Bible in Tuscany.

I had a call also yesterday from one of our Scotch bishops, Mr. Ewing, Bishop of Argyll, from whom I have received occasional messages during past years. I liked him; he seemed to me of a good spirit, and not at all a slave to what is the external of his Church.

236. TO THE SAME.

LINLATHEN, *23d August* 1852.

CHRISTIAN and I went into Edinburgh the other day to see our cousins in Manor Place. Cousin Rachel seems fast

breaking up. Her memory and recollection are sometimes quite gone, so that she does not recognise those dearest to her. There is something most touching in her condition. When I was in town for the funeral of Mr. W. Erskine, I observed the beginning of this, and it seemed to me like a rebuke of all our sorrow for the death of friends. I never knew a more loving spirit than hers, and her expressions now are often just the overflowings of a heart filled with love to God and man. I cannot say what sympathy I have had from her at times when I needed it.[1]

237. TO LORD RUTHERFURD.

LINLATHEN, 14*th Oct.* 1852.

MY BELOVED RUTHERFURD,—How are you? Is your heart finding any rest? I should be so thankful for a word from you, to let me know in what state you are. There was something fearfully stunning and overwhelming in the suddenness of the blow at last,[2] notwithstanding her long delicacy. My dear friend, I know no man who has had to pass through such varied trials as you; none to whom the voice from above has come in such different languages, such sorrow, and such success; and if in your present circumstances I had room in my heart for any other prayer for you than that you might be supported and comforted, I would ask that that oft-repeated voice might not come to you in vain. Our spiritual nourishment here on this pilgrimage is broken body and shed blood, a will of God revealed in a blighted will of man. If you are unable to write yourself, your nephew will perhaps have the kind-

[1] "And poor Cousin Rachel, she too is passing from the scene on which she has always looked with such a smile of kindliness and charity."—(Extract from a letter of the late Lord Elgin, dated Quebec, 23d Octob 1852.)

[2] The death of his wife.

ness to do it for you. I return him my thanks for his first letter.

I regret so much that I did not go down with you the day I saw you at Fullerton's, that I might have seen her face and heard her voice once again.—Ever affectionately yours, T. ERSKINE.

My sisters join their sympathy with mine.

238. TO THE SAME.

LINLATHEN, 30*th Oct.* 1852.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—How is your heart—your burdened and broken heart? Who is living with you, and how are you occupying yourself? I ask this not with the wish that you could find something to withdraw you from your sorrow, but rather hoping that you may be learning its true use. We are placed amongst dying things that we may be forced to take hold of the undying, and to discover that this "undying" is a person with whom it is possible to have fellowship, and from whom we may derive help and consolation, which is certainly our highest learning. "Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest," is the utterance which He addresses to us in all the variety of our circumstances; not calling us from other things, but teaching us to find Him in them all. I shall hope to see you. The burying-ground where the funeral[1] is to be is divided from your own by Jeffrey's.—Ever yours affectionately, T. ERSKINE.

239. TO MRS. BURNETT.

BELOVED cousin Rachel is now released from that bondage under which the flesh lays us. Her clear, sweet spirit

[1] The funeral of Thomas Thomson, Esq., an intimate friend of Lord Rutherfurd.

nad been clouded for the last four months, but still under that mist a blessed inward life from time to time manifested itself. Cousin Manie is wonderfully supported in her loneliness as far as it has gone yet; she is the last, not of her family, but of her generation. . . . Lift up your head, dear friend.—Yours affectionately, T. ERSKINE.

6th Nov. 1852.

Miss Rachel Erskine's nephew, James Erskine,[1] died in 1844, leaving two sons, Henry David and James. The boys were put under the charge of Miss Gourlay, an old and highly-valued friend of the family, and they found what was to them a second home at Linlathen. Mr. Erskine was singularly attached to these orphans,—never freer or happier than when they were by his side returning the fondness he lavished on them with all the frankness and fulness of boyish gratitude and love. The elder brother, Henry David, became on his grandfather's death the laird of Cardross, in due time married Lady Horatia Seymour, and received the appointment of Deputy-Sergeant-at-Arms of the House of Commons, which he still holds. Son after son was born in his family, but not since Cousin Rachel's days—not for a hundred years—had any daughter appeared in the house of Cardross. At last, however, in January 1876, one did appear. The long-wished-for child was born just as Lady Augusta Stanley was passing away from this scene of things. Weak as she then was, her end so very near, her loving spirit wound itself around the new-born babe. In its baptism, and in the name then given, she took the liveliest interest. The kindred spirit of her husband, though then under the shadow of his great impending sorrow, was quickened

[1] Grandson of James Erskine, Esq. of Cardross, married to Lady Christian Bruce. See vol. i. p. 6.

into sympathetic interest, which found vent for itself in the following beautiful lines:—

LINES WRITTEN BY THE DEAN OF WESTMINSTER ON OCCASION OF THE BAPTISM OF RACHEL AUGUSTA ERSKINE, IN ST. STEPHEN'S CRYPT, ON 7TH FEBRUARY 1876.

A hundred stirring years have flown
Since Cardross' ancient halls have known
An infant daughter's winning grace,
To take with sire and son her place.

Kingdoms since then have passed away,
Republics risen to upper day,
Since then the weary, way-worn earth
Has travail'd through a second birth.

What magic name, what angel face
Last filled this long-deserted place,
That—had her lot been lengthened on,
On this dear cradle would have shone?

'Twas that sweet sound, that cheering word,
Which the lorn patriarch gladly heard,
When by the well, in radiance bright,
His "Cousin Rachel" blessed his sight.

And now that in the haunts of men
Daughter and sister lives again,
O may a second Rachel smile,
As full of love, as free from guile.

May that good name her brow enwreath
In Stephen's Porch, in far Menteith,
And gild the coming hopes and fears
Of yet another hundred years!

CHAPTER IV.

Letters from 1853 till 1856.

240. TO THE REV. THOMAS WRIGHT MATHEWS.[1]

125 GEORGE STREET,
EDINBURGH, *26th Feb.* 1853.

DEARLY BELOVED FRIEND,—I have often in a morning determined to write to you during the day, but hitherto my determinations have had no results but to bring on me my own condemnation for non-accomplishment. You were far from well when I last heard of you, and in a way which seemed likely to curtail your work.—I had got thus far, and stopped for some days, when your dear wife's letter to me reached. It recalled to me a lifetime. Our intercourse at Hamburg, thirty-one years ago, continued ever since—in the spirit if not materially—and always connected with man's highest hopes. From what Mrs. Mathews says, I should almost hope that you are better, or rather quite well, for she speaks of your activity and joy in your work, notwithstanding disappointments. I have been reading Maurice's last published volume on the Kings and Prophets

[1] For thirty years minister of the Baptist Church at Boston, in England. He first met Mr. Erskine at Hamburg in 1822 (vol. i. p. 41). Looking back to their intercourse at that time, Mr. Mathews, fifty years afterwards, says, in a letter to Mr. Erskine, "I often feel my religion so fresh and green, and my preaching so young and joyous, that I am surprised, and, inwardly thanking God, cannot but remember that it is to you, as the instrument, I owe all my light and life."

of the Old Testament with great sympathy. Mark particularly the 15th, 16th, and 23d. This last is a wonderful opening up of very simple but glorious truth. I think it is the true way of preaching the final restoration of all. Read the book. I have also been reading Bunsen's "Hippolytus" with interest; though of a different kind, it also is worth your reading. . . .—Ever affectionately,

T. ERSKINE.

241. TO LORD RUTHERFURD.

LINLATHEN, DUNDEE, 15*th Sept.* 1853.

MY DEAR RUTHERFURD,— . . . Have you read Kingsley's "Hypatia"—a picture of life in the fourth century—full of spirit and interest? There is the putrescent corruption of the Roman Empire, the corruption of Christianity, and the self-confident, overbearing courage of the Goths. The scene of action is chiefly in Alexandria. The heroine, Hypatia, is a Neoplatonist, who wishes to revive the old religion which inspired poets and heroes and philosophers. The Jews occupy a considerable place, and Synesius and Augustine are amongst the *dramatis personæ*. Read it and tell me what you think of it; not by letter, but *viva voce*—in this house. You surely will give us two or three days, and let us look back and forward together, on the great ocean behind us and before us.—Ever affectionately yours,

T. E.

242. TO THE SAME.

LINLATHEN, 7*th Oct.* 1853.

MY DEAR RUTHERFURD,—I cannot allow such a letter as your last to remain long unanswered. I grieve to hear that you have sensations which make you apprehend the possible existence of heart-disease; at the same time I do not forget that there is no complaint so often misappre-

hended—the nervous system under disorder mimics all the symptoms so accurately. I hope you have many years of useful work before you—for most useful such work, so done, must be, however much you are in the habit of depreciating it, in comparison with what your just expectations had laid out for you. Life to you now is necessarily a very different thing from what it was; but duty remains, and duty is the substance and real interest of man's life. It is a fight; but a fight in which the victory is that of good over evil, of love over selfishness, of courage over indolence. Fight the good fight of faith, take hold of eternal life; and what is eternal life but the righteous unshifting will of God, in opposition to all selfish wills? and to take hold of it, to adhere to it, is to fight the good fight of faith. Dear Mrs. Clark! I know the tenderness and the affection of her nature; she always reminds me so much of her mother, and oh, how her mother would have wept with her in this sorrow, as she would have wept with you and for you in your sore bereavement. Beloved friend, if we cannot see seeds of light within these rugged husks of time, life is scarce supportable, but there are such seeds, and let us cherish them.—Ever affectionately yours, T. ERSKINE.

243. TO LORD RUTHERFURD.

LINLATHEN, 13*th Oct.* 1853.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—This is my birthday. I am this day sixty-five years of age. I cannot express to you with what a weight of guilt the sense of unprofitableness lies upon me. You are now one of my oldest friends, and no one has ever stood to me in the same place that you have. What a mysterious thing the history of a man's being—visible and invisible—is! Don't you feel it so when you look back on your own? Dear friend, God's blessing be with you.—Yours ever affectionately, T. ERSKINE.

Is it not interesting to consider and look back on the different compartments into which life has been divided? Certain persons and certain thoughts have predominated in each of these compartments; we pass from one to another; from one set of persons and thoughts to another; many of those who have been most important to us have disappeared from the outward picture of our life, but yet retain their place, or even take a larger, in the inner. The picture changes, and we—have we changed? and if we have changed, is it progress, real spiritual progress?

244. TO THE SAME.

LINLATHEN, *8th Nov.* 1853.

DEAR RUTHERFURD,— . . . Have you observed in the papers that the Council of King's College have deposed Maurice on account of heretical doctrines, taught in that volume which I gave you? I understand that the point is, the denial of the unending duration of the future punishment. I congratulate him on being a martyr in such a cause; but I should be sorry if at this day the Church of England, as a body, confirms such a sentence. If spiritual perfection consists (as they would all admit it does) in the love of God, and of men, and of all righteousness, it is not easy to see how such a doctrine as the eternity of punishment can lead to it. Men cannot be frightened into love; and they cannot easily realise God as a God of love, if such a doctrine be believed.—Ever affectionately yours, T. ERSKINE.

245. TO MRS. BURNETT.

LINLATHEN, *9th Nov.* 1853.

. . . I HAD gone to town partly to see Beveridge, my rubbing doctor, who, I think, has really done my eyes, as well as my general health, good by his treatment. . . . Besides my purpose of seeing Beveridge, I wished also

to hear the introductory lecture in the Philosophical Institution by my friend Mr. Scott.[1] I heard it, and liked it very much. He dwelt chiefly on the distinction between information and education, and on the greater desire for the former than for the latter manifested by our population at present. They did not desire a knowledge of principles so much as of the results of principles, which they might turn to immediate account. They did not want any deep improvement within their own mind, but a kind of knowledge which would enable them to make money. Next lecture-evening I heard Ruskin, whom I also liked in his measure. You may have observed in the newspapers that my friend Maurice has been deposed from his professorship in King's College, on account of heretical opinions. The non-eternity of future punishment is, I believe, the point. You know how completely I sympathise with him in this. I hope the Church of England will not treat him as the Church of Scotland treated Campbell.

246. TO MRS. SCHWABE.[2]

LINLATHEN, 12*th Dec.* 1853.

DEAR FRIEND,— . . . The spirit of Mr. Tayler's[3] discourse is very sweet. I feel that he has a brother's heart, and that I can sympathise much with him in the idea he gives of the meaning and purpose of human life. What I desire further for him is that he should feel and teach that there is a sorrow in the heart of God over the resisting of His purpose on the part of man, and that this loving sorrow is manifested in Christ, the man of sorrows, bearing all the burdens of His brethren, the Word, who in the begin-

[1] See Appendix No. I.

[2] A German lady resident near Manchester, a person overflowing with benevolence.

[3] John James Tayler, Principal of Manchester New College.

ning was with God, and was God. I must refer you to your recollections of our conversations at Glyn Garth, when we talked of the necessity under which we found ourselves, when attempting to realise the existence previous to all creation, to conceive of Him as having within the compass of His own being the capacity of both giving and receiving love, and the power of gratifying that capacity; an absolute solitariness is incompatible with the idea, or rather feeling, of self-completeness. This necessity helps us to entertain the idea of the primal relations of Father and Son being contained in the Godhead, and we are glad to receive and acknowledge the sentiment connected with this relationship as the source of all creation. The upper hemisphere of the circle of Deity gives us the spirit of Father, Giver, Master; the lower that of Son, Receiver, Servant. There must be a divine in all moral truth; obedience is as divine as command, both proceeding from love and duty. This, you may say, is a human thought about God, but I cannot think of God otherwise than as an infinitely good man, all-wise and all-powerful. All good desires in man, therefore, I conceive to have their deep root in God, and thus I am forced on the idea of something like a duality in God's unity, to escape from the terrible thought of an eternal solitude before creation, and from the idea that God was driven to create in order to have an object of love.

We see at once the beauty of the idea that the moral creation is to be formed in the image of the Son, thus binding the creature and the Creator together, but not according to the Pantheistic idea, for the moral creature has a free-will which, with reverence let it be said, omnipotence cannot compel, but which all-wise love may train and educate. In the misuse of this free-will man turned from the worship of God to the worship of self, but still, as he was created in the divine image of the divine Son,

and had his standing in the Son, the spirit of the Son within the depths of His being protested against his sin, and suffered for him, the just for the unjust, that He might bring him back to God. This is, I believe, that great work of redemption which is set forth in the history of Jesus Christ.

If you could suppose the spirit of a loving man like St. John imprisoned in the breast of a violent murderer like Barabbas, you could not doubt but that he would feel himself agonised and jarred every moment by the contact of the selfish cruelty with which he was environed. And yet his suffering would not arise simply or chiefly from the discrepancy between himself and Barabbas, but because he would feel that Barabbas was still his fellow-creature, his brother, and he would not be able to endure the thought that his brother should be under the influence of this fearful spiritual malady. In fine, it would not be disapprobation merely, but love that would produce his suffering. And thus, though free leave were given to him to go out from that prison-house, he would say: 'I cannot go, I must remain till I bring back this poor brother out of hatred into love, out of self into God.' And thus would he continue in him, suffering for him, the just for the unjust, that he might bring him back to God. And when Barabbas melted under this suffering love, when he also began to suffer in the thought of having outraged duty and outraged love, when he became partaker of John's sufferings, he would be brought back to God. What I have supposed John to do in the case of Barabbas, I believe in truth and in fact to be done by Jesus Christ in the case of every human being. I believe that He is in every man, and that it is His suffering voice which speaks in the conscience of every man. I believe that He is thus suffering for every man, the just for the unjust, that He may bring us back to

God. I believe thus that the recorded history of our Lord in the Gospels is the outward and objective manifestation of a great subjective truth which is going on, and which will go on until every soul of man is brought back to God. And I am sure that the sorrow which holy love feels for sin is the true essential and divine medicine for sin. I believe that the knowledge of the distinction between right and wrong is a most precious gift; and yet I believe that it cannot alone accomplish the task of turning man's heart from self to God. We need to know that the voice which in conscience speaks to us of right and wrong is the voice of a love which suffers when we do wrong, and must continue to suffer until we return from self to God.

Dear friend, this is a very confused statement, but I am confident that the roots of great truths are contained in it. Our former talks, if remembered by you, will throw a light on it.

You say that you know I have felt sympathy with Unitarians.[1] The truth is, I have thought that they have not been rightly met. They have been confronted with texts and traditions, instead of being met with reason and truth and love. This is my sympathy with them, for I think them wrong.—Ever affectionately yours, T. ERSKINE.

247. TO THOMAS CARLYLE, ESQ.

38 CHARLOTTE SQ., EDINR., 22*d March* 1854.

DEAR MR. CARLYLE,—The welcome which I gave to your kind letter and its accompaniments would have been more truly expressed by a speedier answer. But my time has been occupied by various forms of nothing since I have been in Edinburgh, so that I have been hindered from doing the things which I most wished. . . . My sister,

[1] Mrs. Schwabe was a Unitarian.

Mrs. S., was much flattered by your remembrance and gift, and would have written herself if she had supposed it possible that I could have allowed your packet to remain so long unacknowledged, but she was at Linlathen and I in Edinburgh, and I did not tell her of my non-doings. During my absence here the house of Linlathen was entered by thieves who contrived to take away very little, but left behind an unpleasant feeling of insecurity.

Drummond's pamphlet is a strange production. The general condition of dislocation in society seems to me rather true; but the remedy, that of entering his church, does not meet the necessities of the case. I believe that nothing short of a right perception of the relation of God to man, and of man to God, will do the desired work; but as to the living machinery which may teach or infuse this perception the difficulty remains. Your friend, Lord George Hill,[1] has done something, it appears, and gives occasion to desire the multiplication of Lord Georges. He and Lord Ashburton both act on Nelson's signal, "England expects every man to do his duty," and for my poor part I give them my best thanks and best wishes, hoping for still higher and better things. We had a visit from your friend Kingsley,[2] and I heard his lectures on Alexandria, in company with dear old James Mackenzie. . . . Poor fellow, he has lost his two sisters . . . which makes him very lonely; but he has a fine sociable loving spirit, not easily to be quenched. Give your dear wife my affectionate regards, and believe me to be lovingly yours,

T. ERSKINE.

[1] Referring to Lord George's improvements in an estate in the county of Donegal. See "Facts from Gweedore," by Lord George Hill; 1845.

[2] Charles Kingsley says, "Mr. Erskine of Linlathen is a charming old man." During his visit to Linlathen he writes, "This place is very pleasant, and Mr. Erskine delightful. He gave us a long exposition last night about the indwelling Word, and I am delighted to find that our views seem to agree thoroughly."—*Life of Charles Kingsley*, vol. i. p. 418.

248. TO THE REV. THOMAS WRIGHT MATHEWS.

38 CHARLOTTE SQUARE,
EDINBURGH, *3d May* 1854.

DEAR FRIEND,— . . . I believe that our friend Mr. Campbell is engaged in preparing something on the subject of the Atonement for the press, from which I hope good. The old theology is manifestly falling to pieces, and the danger is, that those who attack should lose the religious spirit in the metaphysical. The true metaphysics of Christianity appear to me more and more simple. That life consists in will; that the will of God is eternal life, and the selfish will of man is the condemned life; and that man, by adopting the will of God, becomes partaker of the eternal life. Love to your wife.—Ever yours,

T. ERSKINE.

249. TO CHEVALIER BUNSEN.

LINLATHEN, DUNDEE, *8th August* 1854.

MY DEAR CHEVALIER,—Your farewell lines from St. Katherine's Dock were very gratifying to me, written as they were from under such a pressure of thoughts as must have been lying upon you at that time. I now congratulate you on your escape, not from work, for I can never regard true genuine work in a great cause to be other than a privilege and an honour, but from the perplexity of being called to do work in one way which you thought ought to be done in another. And though I can never congratulate any man on leaving England, yet I can congratulate you on being set down at Heidelberg, and on the banks of that beautiful stream. The Neckar I have always considered the sweetest feature in Germany. I wish you much peace there and domestic enjoyment, and much inspiration in true philosophy and true history, to give value to that leisure

which is given you. I have known you now for nearly thirty years, and I have always found my intercourse with you to be a stimulant for good to me, because I have always found you living under a vocation to use the faculties God has bestowed on you, for the advancement of light and truth in the world. I am sure that you will do so in your present circumstances, and that many will profit by your retirement.

I hope your ladies are all well,—Madame Bunsen and her daughter, Miss Amelia, and the rest. The love of God is everywhere, and so the possibility of peace and spiritual progress is everywhere also. May this possibility have its full realisation in your house. Farewell.—Ever truly yours, T. ERSKINE.

250. TO MRS. MACHAR.

LINLATHEN, *Oct.* 10, 1854.

THE religious teaching generally in this country is to me most unsatisfactory. The salvation that is preached as the great object of desire is a deliverance from punishment instead of a deliverance from sin; and sin itself is spoken of more as particular acts than as the state of a man not living under the will and love of God. Then again men are urged to make themselves the children of God, instead of being taught that this is the condition of men by creation and redemption; and that this condition implies the capacity of walking accordingly, because it implies that God is ever giving His Spirit to men, and that men may always live by that Spirit. The head of every man is Christ, and He is the true light which lighteneth every man which cometh into the world. When I know that God made me that He might have a holy child, and when I know that this purpose of His is the secret principle of all His dealings with me, that He is following me in the secrets of my

thoughts and feelings for this end, and that He Himself suffers under every wrong thought and feeling which I permit in myself, then I can form some idea of God's love, the love which gave Christ to taste death for every man, and who in doing this said, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father."

It is difficult to stop on this subject, and I find that I have filled my sheet, so I must change my subject and speak of ourselves, of our old remembrances, of affectionate hearts that then became knit to us by a bond not to be broken. There is much to humble us in that retrospection. How much hope there was of being used as instruments of deliverance to many, and how little there has been realised! This does not shake my conviction as to the immense importance of the truth committed to us, but it does make me feel how the unworthiness of the vessel may deprive the truth of its efficiency and witness. May the blessing of God be on you and yours, T. E.

251. TO MR. MAURICE.

7 FORRES STREET, EDINBURGH, *3d Nov.* 1854.

MY DEAR AND MUCH-HONOURED FRIEND,—I cannot easily express to you the depth of sympathy with which I have been reading your book which you sent me.[1] I have read the dedicatory letter and the first five sermons. In the letter, the expression of your feeling is sometimes harrowing; it seems written in your heart's blood. I was at first almost surprised that you could feel so unspiritual and, I might even say, so unintelligent a criticism so deeply; but I soon perceived that your agony was a righteous agony, which it would be good for me and others to enter into. "If ye die with Him, ye shall live with Him; if ye suffer

[1] *The Doctrine of Sacrifice.*

with Him, ye shall reign with Him." Beloved friend, you are witnessing a good confession for the God of truth; and I am thankful to say, that I feel more and more, in your tone and manner of expressing yourself, the outcoming of a great conviction, which uses your faculties for its own purpose.

Were I capable of it, I should rejoice to give my countrymen the true idea of your method of teaching, as well as of the teaching itself; feeling, as I do, that they are so much occupied and possessed by another far inferior method, that they turn away from that higher and purer kind, as if it were unintelligible; but I am not fit for the task. I wished often, during the course of the summer, to have tried to have persuaded you to spend some quiet time with us; but we thought that any place which was not your own home, or any people which were not your own people, might be a burden to you. Farewell.—Ever truly yours, T. ERSKINE.

I shall be in Edinburgh when you are down, and I would look out for a resting-place for you, if you would allow me.

252. TO MR. MAURICE.

7 FORRES STREET, *20th Nov.* [1854].

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I have just read the 13th sermon of the "Doctrine of Sacrifice." As I finished those that preceded it, I often had the thought of writing to you and expressing the deep sympathy which I felt, and my conviction that this was indeed the unveiling of our Father's heart. But after reading "Christ's Sacrifice a Peace-offering for Mankind," I cannot help writing to say how thankful I feel to God that such words are spoken to our generation, and that they are words of truth and soberness, though

they cast into deep shade all that man, if left to the mere inspiration of his own desires, could ever have imagined.

If the rash censures which have been passed upon your Essays have led to this production, good has certainly come out of evil; and if your censurer himself reads these discourses, I cannot but think that his heart must smite him for what he has said.

The paragraph beginning on the 211th page, and ending in the next, is inexpressibly precious. I hope to speak to you of some of these things at leisure, or rather to hear you; and to this end, I hope you will allow me, as I proposed to you before, to be your host whilst you are in Edinburgh. . . .—Yours ever truly, T. ERSKINE.

253. TO THE REV. ALEX. J. SCOTT.

EDINBURGH, 29*th November* 1854.

MY DEAR FRIEND,— . . . Maurice is expected here on Monday to deliver his lectures on the religion of ancient Rome. I am happy to have an opportunity of seeing him here quietly, which I hope to do, as he is to live with my sister Mrs. Stirling and me. I have read his last volume with exceeding interest; I never read anything in the form of sermon that I liked better than some of them,—the 12th, 13th, 14th, and 15th especially. I am thankful that this subject has been forced on the attention of the religious people of the country. They have been long accustomed to consider salvation to consist in a deliverance from a punishment, instead of a deliverance from that which deserves punishment, and still more they have been taught to rest their hope on something else than the character of God. . . .—Yours ever affectionately,

T. ERSKINE.

254. TO MRS. PATERSON.

21 WESTBOURNE STREET, LONDON, *14th Feb.* [1855].

MY DEAR DAVIE,—. . . I may as well give you a sketch of yesterday's proceedings. Before breakfast was well away, Mrs. Schwabe made her energetic and loving appearance. She sat with us a good while. . . . Mr. Maurice then came in, and I almost immediately stated to him the difficulties and obscurities which had been felt by many readers of his works, even by those who admired them and loved their spirit. I told him, that people could not make out whether, according to him, the sacrifice of Christ had made any change on the general condition of humanity, or whether it was only a manifestation of God's character in relation to man. I pressed on him that he might make this more distinct, and ought to do it. When he went away, we went out, and called on the Bishop of Natal, who is a handsome, young, intelligent, frank-looking man; he spoke pleasantly about his mission. . . .—Ever affectionately yours, T. ERSKINE.

255. TO THE REV. THOMAS WRIGHT MATHEWS.

5 DUKE STREET, PORTLAND PLACE,
LONDON, *12th April* 1855.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I wish you would get from that goddaughter of the old lexicographer some documents authenticating her relationship as goddaughter to him. Do you think that, in the parish register of her baptism, any record of the fact could be found? For, if the history could be fairly made out, there can be little doubt but that something could be done for her. I mentioned the matter to Carlyle, who immediately said that the Prime Minister would feel that the bestowment of a small pension, at least

to the extent of keeping her from want, would be recognised by the whole country as a right use of power. Now, do something speedily, my dear man. I heard Maurice on Sunday. His father was lying an unburied corpse, having died on Friday before. His text was the sixteenth Psalm, which he read over three times with excellent comment; first, as it must have been understood or felt by David or his contemporaries; second, as it might have been used by Christ Himself; thirdly, as it is to be understood by ourselves. It was one of the most striking sermons I have ever listened to. . . .—Ever yours affectionately,

T. ERSKINE.

256. TO THE REV. J. M'LEOD CAMPBELL.

LONDON, *April* 1855.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—. . . I have seen a good deal of Maurice. I hear him every Sunday with great interest. He fully apprehends that what has given to earnest Calvinistic preaching its great power is, that it sets forth God and not man, as Arminianism has done.[1] I have seen Kingsley too, and Bishop Ewing, and a Mr. Baldwin Brown, a friend of Scott's, an Independent minister. I also see Carlyle, whom I really love, there is so much geniality of heart about him. My sister Mrs. Stirling is struggling against cold and London oppression, sooty atmosphere, visiting, etc.—Yours ever affectionately, T. ERSKINE.

257. TO THE REV. THOMAS WRIGHT MATHEWS.

5 DUKE ST., PORTLAND PLACE, 11*th May* 1855.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—Have I seemed negligent of you and your commission? But not so in fact, for I went down to

[1] Speaking of Calvinism and Arminianism, Mr. Erskine said that the former was a sheep in wolf's clothing,—the latter a wolf in sheep's clothing.

Deptford with Carlyle and saw your ladies and their curious relics; and Carlyle met almost immediately after with the Bishop of Oxford, who is the almoner of some royal bounty, and put down their names (both of them, and to the survivor) for £10 annually, which is some addition to their small means. He has hope of something further, but that is only in prospect. Dear Sir Robert Inglis has been carried away from the waves of this troublous world to the rest which remaineth to the people of God. I have known and loved him long, and have received much love from him, and so the world is that much emptier for me. . . . Ever affectionately yours, T. ERSKINE.

258. TO MRS. BURNETT.

5 DUKE STREET, PORTLAND PLACE, *2d June* 1855.

. . . YOU, dear friend, have many burdens, and you know how the sympathising heart of Jesus bears them all with you. Afflicted in all your afflictions, and saying to you, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father," you are not grieving unnoticed or unfelt for. The everlasting God notices and feels as a father, a brother. The tenderest of mothers never felt for her child as He does for you—for me. . . . My sister and I are becoming very tired of London, but she will not leave me. We have seen many friends, and had much enjoyment. We weekly hear Maurice, and see him occasionally. He went with us yesterday morning to visit Price's patent candle-works; a most interesting factory, where 1500 persons of all ages and sexes are employed, and where the object seems not to be more to make money or candles than to give right moral and religious training. I was much struck and delighted with all I saw. One of the partners seems to have devoted himself entirely to this work; he lives

amongst the people, and seems to bear every one's burdens in the rightest way. There was quietness, and diligence, and gentleness throughout. Maurice himself is a thorough worker, but his work is specially to train others to work. It seems as if the hearts of a good many had been stirred up to seek the good of others in the spirit of Christ. What a blessed thing even human sympathy is, and how much more blessed when it is understood to be an overflowing of the heart of God into these human hearts! I endeavour, when I see any one caring for me, to remember this and to feel it. Give my affectionate regards to all your family. . . .—Yours ever affectionately, T. E.

259. TO MR. MAURICE.

August 1855.

MY DEAR FRIEND,— . . . I was called on Friday last week to attend the funeral of F. Russell's wife; you remember him, I am sure. She was an amiable and most interesting person. . . . I met Dr. Hanna of the Free Church there, who told me that your friend Davis's brother in the Crimea was very ill—dangerously so. He told me also an interesting anecdote of poor Capt. Lyons, who had died at Therapia under the care of the Mackenzies. Just before his death, Mrs. Mackenzie carried something to him. He rallied a little and thanked her, and then said, "Goodbye," and, as if to comfort her, he added, "You must expect to lose some of your patients." Dear Russell's house is darkened. My sisters join me in best regards to you both.—Ever affectionately yours, T. ERSKINE.

260. TO M. GAUSSEN.

LINLATHEN, 27*th Aug.* 1855.

MY DEAR GAUSSEN,—We have just received a letter from our cousin, Mrs. Bosanquet, in which she speaks of

you and your mother, and your sister and Caroline, in terms which correspond so well with the impressions which remain in my own heart of you all, that I feel stirred up to write a word of brotherly love to you. My visits to Geneva, and my relations with many there whom I loved, and hope always to love, form one of the most pleasing remembrances of my life. I often pass them in review before my mind's eye, the dead and the living, and recall words and looks, which reveal the spirit, and which address and can only be understood by our spiritual organs.

The beautiful nature, the lake, the mountains, the sunrisings and settings, the mysteries of light, and colour, and distance, re-appear also like the visions of another world purified from all pollutions, declaring infinite love, and power, and holiness. I should like to pay another visit to that lovely land, and to converse with you, my friend, on the many wonderful things which our God has shown us and taught us since we first met, above thirty years ago. For my own part I have much reason to be ashamed, but I have also much reason to bless the God of all patience. Dear Merle has lost his wife; he was my first Genevese friend, and I have never ceased to love him. Mr. Haldane had paid his visit to you a short time before that, and had been the means of stirring up a new life in some of the young men. The matter of his teaching was what ought to be the subject of all teaching, "The free grace of God;" but he surely did not sufficiently consider the fearful power in man to resist that grace, and so fell into the mistake of supposing that those only who manifested the effects of grace had been visited by grace, or were embraced within God's purpose of grace; and thus man's confidence was necessarily made to depend on something which he discovered within himself, instead of the purpose of God revealed in Jesus Christ for every man. I cannot

write to you, my dear friend, without saying something of this great salvation, which God is working out against such opposition on the part of man. Give my love to Merle and my sympathy. Give my love to all the branches of the dear C— family and to all the Cramers, descendants of my loving hosts, M. and Mad. Cramer; to the descendants also of Mad. Necker de Saussure—the Turretins. Farewell, beloved friend. My affectionate regards to each member of your own family.—Ever truly yours,

T. ERSKINE.

The following letter of M. Gaussen gives an affecting narrative of the death of his mother:—

TO MR. ERSKINE.

LES GROTTES, 17 *Sept.* 1855.

MON CHER ERSKINE,—Depuis hier je n'ai plus de mère ici-bas. Je me sens le besoin de vous le faire savoir, pour que vous vous associez à ma douleur et à mes consolations. Vous y avez été vous même, vous aviez connu le prix de celle que j'ai perdue. Elle était encore Vendredi matin d'une admirable santé pour son grand âge, d'une amabilité d'esprit et d'une tendresse de cœur rarement données à de plus jeunes. Vendredi, à 8 heures du matin, mes cousines Puerari, ma sœur, ma fille, mes quatre domestiques et moi, nous montâmes dans sa chambre autour de son lit, pour la prière du matin, qui devait avoir un intérêt particulier, parceque c'était le jour anniversaire de sa 91ᵉ année. Elle nous dit après la prière des mots tendres et charmants que je crois entendre encore. Nous descendîmes pour déjeuner; mais on vint bientôt appeler ma sœur de sa part (c'était 9½ heures). "Quand je te vois entrer dans ma chambre," lui dit-elle, "je suis la plus heureuse des mères." "Je t'aime pour ce que je vois en toi," ajouta-t-elle (à l'occasion d'un tendre reproche que lui faisait Sophie), "mais Dieu m'aime malgré ce qu'il voit

en moi. Je désire me lever." Et sans attendre la réponse, elle sortit elle-même de son lit et s'assit sur un fauteuil pour s'habiller de ses propres mains, quand Sophie vit son visage s'altérer, courut à elle et s'agenouilla à ses côtés, nous faisant appeler. Ma mère n'était plus sur la terre! Nous fûmes quelque tems à ne le pas croire; car il n'y eut pas une plainte, pas un effort, pas un soupir; nous n'avons pas même pu dire le moment précis où son âme bienheureux s'envolait vers son Dieu. Il y a cinq semaines qu'ayant fait une chute qui n'eut aucune suite fâcheuse, elle crut être à son dernier jour et nous fit tous appeler pour nous donner sa bénédiction: "Rendez grâce avec moi," nous dit-elle, "j'avais toujours craint ce moment; mais Dieu me remplit l'âme d'une paix qui m'étonne moi-même." Merle, Demale, Bertholet et moi, nous priâmes tour à tour hier sur sa tombe; beaucoup d'amis et de frères chantaient autour de la fosse ce beau cantique: "Non, ce n'est pas mourir que d'aller vers son Dieu. . . ." Je suis très affligé; je sens un grand vide de n'avoir plus ce cœur de mère occupé de son fils sur la terre; de ne plus retrouver à notre table cette bonne tendre et vénérée amie qui était l'ornement et la joie de ma maison, et qui portait des fruits de justice jusque dans la vieillesse toute blanche, arbre planté de Dieu dans les parvis de l'Éternel. Je demande au Seigneur qu'il m'instruise, m'humilie, et me rende plus aimant—par sa sainte parole et par ses dispensations.

Cher ami, voilà bien des détails. Pour un autre que vous ils seraient de trop. Mais j'ai cru les devoir à votre amitié. Je n'ai jamais oublié ce mot aimable que vous me dites, il y a 25 ans: "Gaussen, je connais votre mère, et vous n'avez pas connu la mienne." Ce mot demeure encore sur mon cœur. Je me sens une fraternité de plus avec ceux qui aiment et vénèrent une mère. Dieu vous bénisse et vous garde, mon cher Erskine! Recevez les

vœux sincères, sérieux et tendres, de mon amitié. Je ne veux pas controverser avec vous ; vous avez dix fois plus d'esprit que moi ; je dirai que vous en avez trop. Ne construisez pas Dieu, cher ami ; révérez-le tel que la Sainte Bible, divinement inspirée et faite pour les simples, l'a décrit. Ce Dieu nous a convertis des idoles de ce monde pour le servir comme un Dieu vivant et vrai, et pour attendre des cieux son fils Jésus qui nous a délivrés de la colère à venir. Certainement il y a un colère à venir, puisque Dieu le dit. Certainement il y a un Fils unique qui en délivre les croyants. Certainement celui qui a le Fils a la vie éternelle, mais celui qui ne croit pas au Fils, la colère de Dieu reste sur lui. O grâces à Dieu pour son don ineffable. Je vous ai gardé une vraie affection et une vraie estime ; j'ai aussi des souvenirs très reconnaissants de vous et de votre famille. Saluez, je vous prie, de ma part Monsieur et Madame Paterson, ainsi que Madame Stirling (votre sœur) si elle se souvient de moi.—Votre affligé et affectionné, L. GAUSSEN.

P.S.—Vous auriez bien fait d'écrire quelques paroles de sympathie à Merle. J'ai eu beaucoup de plaisir à faire la connaissance des Bosanquet et de tous leurs garçons. J'aimais, en voyant Madame, à me rappeler sa bonne sœur. Le mari est un homme fait droit. J'avais connu son père, qui me disait de lui, il y a une quinzaine d'années : " J'ai en Lincolnshire un très bon fils, tendre et respectueux."

261. TO M. GAUSSEN.

LINLATHEN, 22*d Sept.* 1855.

DEAR GAUSSEN, BELOVED FRIEND,—So that long life is terminated, and you have no longer before your eyes that sweet symbol of the love of your Father in heaven. She is no longer with you, but I believe, as you do, that these human relationships have an eternal truth in them, spring-

ing from an eternal root, the eternal relations of the Father and the Son. He has formed us in His own image, and our human relationships are parts of that image, and therefore in their measure and degree may be expected to partake in the eternity of their root. Just before I received your letter, I had been reading at our family worship the 17th chapter of St. John, in which our Lord speaks such wonderful words about the union of man with God, "I in them, and Thou in me," "that they may be made perfect in one." Dear friend, I would suffer with you, and I would also rejoice with you for her sake, for her release from the bondage of mortality. I can accompany you in the long retrospect of life, in the whole of which she occupies such a place; so that her life was a constituent element of your life from infancy onwards. Dear woman—I see her before me, her genial, quiet, motherly face and character; her look and voice of benevolence and wisdom and solidity. I know no higher attribution that can be given to man than that of unselfishness and dutifulness, recognising that the law of his being does not spring from himself, but comes to him from God. And this makes the distinction between the world's love and Christian love. Christian love is unselfish and dutiful, whilst the other with all its beauty is soiled by selfishness in one form or other. And thus we have our completeness in Christ. The Son comes from the bosom of the Father to be the ground and law of man's being, and to know Him as such, and the Father who sent Him, is eternal life. The eternal death consists in man's persisting in abiding in his own selfish will, and refusing that kingdom of heaven a place within him. I love you, dear Gaussen. The scenes at Satigny return to me like the scenes of my youth, as do other connections at Geneva. . . . You speak to me of dear Merle, and say that I ought to write to him. Since ever I heard of his sorrow, I have

purposed to write to him, but my own unmarried condition made me feel as if I were less fitted to be a sympathiser with him than I can be in your sorrow. Since my first meeting with Merle I have never ceased to value and love him, and I know the exceeding tenderness of his affections. I have read the little *souvenir* with deep interest and thankfulness. . . . Madlle. Sophie and your daughter will feel this blank along with you, but you will find it abundantly supplied in Him who is the completeness of man.—Ever affectionately yours, T. ERSKINE.

P.S.—I shall write to Merle in a day or two; in the meantime assure him of my brotherly love and sympathy. Dear friend, on reading over this letter, I feel as if I had not given out the tithe of my love to you, or of my gratitude for your writing to me so soon.

262. TO THOMAS CARLYLE, ESQ.

LINLATHEN, 20*th Oct.* 1855.

MY DEAR MR. CARLYLE,—Every token of your remembrance is highly valued by me, and the pamphlet itself is not a little interesting and instructive. A man who would be helpful to men must be a brother, not a supercilious dealer out of doles to them. The mercy which expresses itself in the last way can bless neither him that gives nor him that takes. Mr. Waddell has certainly some administrative faculty, but then he was a dissenter, and an unauthorised unofficial philanthropist, and as such he had no right nor reason to expect anything but counteraction from official incapables. It is a comfort, however, to see that an administrative faculty even in such circumstances can accomplish something, and most gratifying it is to find what recognition it meets from those in whose behalf it is exercised. The complete triumph would be to enlist even

the influential incapables themselves in the service by peaceful wisdom.

I hope you are now finding the good effects of your silent and solitary rides on your health both of body and mind. I take it for granted that you are now returned to London (although it is rather too soon to leave the leafy lanes, when they are just putting on their autumnal colours), and that you are again engaged with the old seven years' man. A painful wrestle with difficulties he had, and his biographer, I suppose, must have if he would through him give faithful instruction to living men. . . . Tell the lady that I feel it to be very long since I had a line from her. This with my best regards.—Yours ever most truly, with all good wishes, T. ERSKINE.

263. TO M. ADOLPHE MONOD.

21 CHARLOTTE SQUARE, EDINBURGH,
24th Dec. 1855.

BELOVED FRIEND AND BROTHER IN CHRIST,—I thank our God for you and myself and all men, for that eternal purpose of grace which he hath purposed in Christ, towards us, in bringing us into being, that we might be partakers of the divine nature, that we might know His will and find it to be eternal life. I thank Him that He has given us His Son to be our permanent eternal Head, through whom we have continual access to Him, and continual return to Him after all our wanderings, through whom you have strength given you to drink the bitter cup put into your hand, and to find it water of life. "I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one" is the prayer of our Head for us, the prayer of Him whom the Father heareth alway. May you, my brother, unceasingly experience the answer to this prayer. May you feel the reality of that union ever growing and strengthening by

all the sufferings which He sees fit to appoint for you. God is love. Love is the divine nature.

What a sight shall we have when our eyes are fully opened! But we can only be partakers of that divine nature, we can only become capable of that vision of love, by an entire submission, by consenting to be receivers. And that last lesson, I believe, He is now teaching you by this suffering. You have been always a blessing to me, a good gift from God to my soul. I hope to know you and to love you for ever. Now, He teaches us to love by ministering to us through each other! Farewell, brother beloved.—Ever affectionately yours, T. ERSKINE.

My sisters join their affectionate sympathy with mine, with regard to yourself, dear friend, and also with regard to your family, especially dear Madame Monod.

264. TO THE REV. THOMAS WRIGHT MATHEWS.

21 CHARLOTTE SQUARE, 13*th Feb.* 1856.

DEAR FRIEND,—. . . . I have been reading Mr. Campbell's book on the Nature of the Atonement with great interest and sympathy. It is full of precious spiritual thought expressed in a form more adapted to the generality of minds (especially in this country of Scotland, and the dissenting English churches) than Maurice's books. I think it will influence public opinion considerably on the great subject which it treats. It deals so lovingly with those whose theories it condemns, and founds its judgment on principles which a spiritually-minded man cannot but consent to. . . .

265. TO THE REV. J. M'LEOD CAMPBELL.

21 CHARLOTTE SQUARE, 22*d Feb.* 1856.

DEAR MR. CAMPBELL,—I am afraid that you will find it difficult to exculpate me, in my protracted silence, of

forgetting that there is a righteous life in man's favour which it is righteous to desire, and which it is therefore unrighteous to withhold. But I have been anxious to read all the book[1] with my own eyes, and to read and consciously understand every clause of it, that I might be able really to testify to you the immense amount of thankful sympathy that I have felt with the book, and the spirit of its author. I have only arrived at the 324th page, and thus have not the right to speak of the whole book, but the chapter which I am reading has such a character of winding up and recapitulation in it, that I permit myself to anticipate a day, in which I expect to terminate my reading. I wish I had noted down as I went along the passages or topics which more especially struck or pleased me, but this I have done very imperfectly, and only marking pages and not subjects.

You have been most happy in finding, in such a universally recognised Calvinistic authority as Edwards, the basis of your great argument. This will give your book an advantage which it could not have had by any mere address to reason and conscience.

Your intellectual type is also, in a certain measure, recognisable as national, and must attract in this country much more assent than Maurice's works.

The intercession of Christ you have, I think, specially well illustrated—the very righteousness of Christ in humanity, presenting a hope to the Father's mind for all the humanity, being a manifestation of its capacities. The 10th chapter, and those that follow it, connecting the historical detail of our Lord's life and sufferings with the principle of atonement, are excellent, as is the chapter on the necessary nature of salvation. I had hoped to write a long letter, but I am obliged to stop. I think and hope that this work is to produce much fruit, by the blessing of God. . . . .—Yours ever affectionately, T. ERSKINE.

[1] *The Nature of the Atonement*, by J. M'Leod Campbell.

266. TO MADAME DE STAËL.

9th May 1856.

DEAR FRIEND,—So Adolphe Monod has ceased to be seen of men. Il a "passé au Père." I had known and loved him for many years, and I can well understand the void which his death will occasion amongst his friends in Paris. His loss as a Christian minister is also very great, and not easily to be supplied. His ability as a preacher, though rare, was yet not so rare as the inward character of his spirit, his deep and tender love, his unselfishness, his unworldliness, his noble transparency, his candour, which always disposed him to give their full weight to ideas differing from his own, and at the same time his faithfulness, which kept him from any compromise of truth. Jesus wept at the grave of Lazarus to show us the mind of God in such circumstances. It is wonderful to think that He, who no doubt wept at the grave of Adolphe Monod, should yet have seen it needful to lay such a weight of suffering on his last days. I feel that it could only have been an infinite love contemplating an infinitely glorious result that could have inflicted that suffering. Two or three months before, I had received a letter written to his dictation (by his daughter, I suppose), but signed by himself, and addressed to Charles Scholl of Lausanne, Gaussen of Geneva, and to me, as three friends who had been specially used by God as helps to him in his spiritual life. . . .

This remarkable letter, having passed through the hands of MM. Scholl and Gaussen, was left finally in the custody of Mr. Erskine. This was done by Monod's own direction. His family have kindly given permission for its publication :—

A MM. GAUSSEN, SCHOLL, ET ERSKINE.

PARIS, 1*er Décembre* 1855.

IL y a trois amis dont j'aime à associer les noms, pour la part considérable qu'ils ont eue tous trois, en des temps, et à des titres divers, à la conversion de mon âme. Je veux leur rendre témoignage de ma reconnaissance, aujourd'hui que je m'attends à passer bientôt de ce monde au Père, et que je puise toutes mes consolations dans la foi qu'ils m'ont apprise. Ces sont Louis Gaussen, Charles Scholl, et Thomas Erskine. Le premier a opéré lentement sur mon esprit par son commerce bienveillant, par sa prédication, par ses exemples, et par ses pieux entretiens de Saligny. Le second m'a présenté l'Évangile dans des entrevues plus courtes, sous un aspect pratique, si aimable, et en même temps si sage et si vrai, qu'il lui a gagné mon cœur. Le troisième à Genève a déraciné mes préjugés intellectuels en réconciliant dans mon esprit l'évangile avec la saine philosophie; après quoi à Naples il a mis la dernière main à l'œuvre autant que cela dépendait de l'homme, en éclairant et tout ensemble en achevant d'attrister ma mélancolie par le contraste de sa paix parfaite et de sa tendre charité. Je n'oublierai jamais nos promenades de Capo di Monte, ni l'accent dont il me disait, à la vue du soleil se couchant sur le magnifique bassin de Naples: "Truly the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun." Ces trois amis n'ont pas été seuls à travailler pour mon âme, comment oublierais-je ce que la fidélité de Frédéric a été pour nous tous, et ce qu'a fait pour moi l'humble et prudente Jeannette Picerari, sans parler d'autres amis dans ma famille ou au dehors à Genève et ailleurs! Mais les trois amis auxquels j'adresse ces lignes ont été appelés de Dieu à exercer sur moi une influence combinée dans laquelle ils

se complétaient mutuellement, sans le savoir. Je commence par donner toute gloire à Dieu, et puis je leur dis à eux-mêmes de quel amour je suis pénétré pour eux, et de quel cœur je demande à Dieu de les tenir de ses bénédictions les plus précieuses dans la vie et dans la mort en leur épargnant, s'il est possible, la fournaise par laquelle sa miséricorde me fait passer. En même temps je me recommande à leurs prières, pour qu'ils couronnent le bien qu'ils m'ont fait en demandant pour moi la grâce de ne pas laisser échapper ma patience, et de glorifier Dieu jusqu'au bout de mon combat en proportion de l'amertume de mes douleurs.

Je prie Gaussen de faire passer cette lettre à Scholl, et Scholl à Erskine; ce sera comme un lien de plus entre eux, comme entre chacun d'eux et moi, dans l'amour de Christ.

ADOLPHE MONOD.

CHAPTER V.

Letters from 1856 till 1862.

THE event of this period was the death of Captain Paterson. So long as the two families lived together at Linlathen he had contributed scarcely less than Mrs. Stirling to the management and the amenities of that happy home, and ever afterwards it was a most brotherly relationship that existed betwixt him and Mr. Erskine. It was his rare self-abnegation—a heart more than ordinarily at leisure from itself,—which gave him such a hold upon all connected with him.

267. TO CAPTAIN PATERSON.

LINLATHEN, *14th August* 1856.

BELOVED FRIEND AND BROTHER,—I hear of you almost daily, and the news about you is one of the chief interests of this house; but I feel a desire to write to yourself personally, not that I expect you to answer me, but that I wish to express to you, how dear you are, and how precious your well-being is to me. You have been a tried and trusted friend now for thirty-five years; and we have been bound together by the kindnesses of time and by the hopes of eternity. You have been a loving husband to my dear sister, and a helpful and affectionate brother and friend to me; and now we have both arrived at that time of life, which of itself, and

without any particular attack of sickness, may well warn us that our connection in this world must soon come to an end.

268. TO THE REV. J. M'LEOD CAMPBELL.

Monday, Sept. 1, 1856.

OUR beloved friend and brother Captain Paterson died this morning. My sister and I received the information on Saturday that he was worse, and we lost no time in coming to the scene of sorrow. We arrived between four and five o'clock, and found that an oppression on the brain had already begun, and was thus making the mortal struggle much more painful to surrounding friends. The fearful conflict between life and death had been going on since Friday, and it continued with terrible violence till this morning a little after eight o'clock. There were occasional sweet recognitions and expressions of love unutterable, especially to his wife and son, also to Mrs. Stirling and myself, and sometimes words and looks which betokened the highest things. His natural vigour made the struggle terrifically severe. But we knew him, and had long known him as one of the most humble and most faithful of our Christian brotherhood.[1] All who knew him knew this, and will feel the loss severely; but to his wife, to whom since their union he had been the most affectionate of husbands, the loss is of a character which nothing but her knowledge of the purpose of Him who made them and joined them, and who had led them through all the events of their pilgrimage, could make supportable. The first words she spoke after the spirit had escaped from the body were words of

[1] "Pour 35 ans il avait été un membre de notre famille, comme s'il l'avait été par naissance. C'était un homme d'une simplicité et loyauté de caractère parfait, tendre à sa femme, et affectueux à Madame Stirling et moi, et à tous nos parents, et surtout le cœur droit envers Dieu son Sauveur."—*Extract from letter to M. Cramer Mallet.*

thankfulness. How precious is the knowledge of Him who hath overcome death, and Him who hath the power of death! and as His victory was through death, so He leads us by the same way.

It is impossible not to believe that He had deepest sympathy with His servant during these dark hours, and that He had not real communion with him, although the lower nature had no participation in it. Oh friend, pray for us that we may gain from this sorrow all that our Father intends for us. . . . You will write to her; you know how she values your sympathy.—Ever affectionately yours,

T. ERSKINE.

269. TO THE REV. J. M'LEOD CAMPBELL.

LINLATHEN, *2d Oct.* 1856.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—Somehow or other Maurice's letter has been lost, which I regret, chiefly because I cannot give you the words in which he expresses himself on the subject of your book. His commendation of it however is very high for its reach of thought, its logical development of thought, and the wise and loving candour of its judgment of other views. He is not particular in what he says of it, and I almost hope that he may have written to yourself about it.[1] . . .

I saw Wylie the other day; he told me of different persons, ministers, who were reading your book and getting something out of it, which they felt to be new and true. We are all pretty well here. We three are looking back

[1] This letter was afterwards recovered. In it Mr. Maurice says:—"I have wished to write to you about many things, especially about Mr. Campbell's beautiful and profoundly interesting book. . . . It was all and more than all I had expected. The serenity of it and his sympathy with those who differed from him were the qualities in it which struck me most, and made me most ashamed, though I fully recognised its logical power, and its grasp of that which is above and beneath all logic."

forty years to the year 1816 when our brother died; the harvest that year was just like what we shall have this year. That year was the beginning of much to us, and to many of our relations. We began to know that God may be known—"if haply we may feel after Him, and find Him." Mrs. Paterson looks ill, very broken-like, meeting in everything what reminds her of those who are withdrawn behind the veil. She is never or very rarely at all agitated. . . In the year 1816 neither of my sisters was married, and now they are both widows. We are all three going down hill fast. Our united ages this month, in which we were all three born, amount exactly to 200 years—two centuries! I am reading Plato occasionally with exceeding interest.[1] Surely the spirit of Socrates saw a great light, and he was faithful to his light. If he had lived at the time of Paul's visit to Athens, I feel assured that he would have embraced the Gospel, and then what interesting dialogues we should have had! . . .—Ever affectionately yours,

T. ERSKINE.

270. TO LADY CAROLINE CHARTERIS.

LINLATHEN, 27*th Oct.* 1856.

DEAR LADY CAROLINE,—I am very much obliged to you for the kind thought of sending me *les adieux* of my dear and admirable friend Adolphe Monod. The sketch of him is exceedingly like, and gives the idea of perfect

[1] "His literary tastes were very refined. Shakespeare was his favourite author among the moderns, and to hear Mr. Erskine quoting Shakespeare was no ordinary treat. His favourites among the ancients were Homer and Plato. He read the *Iliad* through continuously, finishing about the year 1838. Plato engaged much of his leisure time during the rest of his life. On one occasion the *Phaedo* having been referred to, he read it over, he said, while at Naples."—(Extract from letter of Dr. Richard Low of Broughty Ferry, who knew Mr. Erskine well, and to whom he was warmly attached.)

peace and patience under intense suffering. I think that portrait is one of the best sermons in the volume. . . . Adolphe lived as a branch of the true Vine, and he experienced the power of the sap rising out of the Vine, and bringing forth its fruit in him. Paul said, speaking of things which had been done by him, "Yet not I, but Christ living in me." This also in his measure Adolphe could also say. . . .

I think it probable you may before now have heard of our loss. Captain Paterson was removed from this world in the end of August. He was a faithful, affectionate man. He had been married thirty-five years, and had adopted all our family connections, and had been adopted by them, as fully as if he had been of our own blood. He had suffered a great deal for the last few months; but he knew the purpose of God, and I doubt not received a large blessing through his sufferings. His loss to us all is very great, especially to his wife, than whom no woman ever had a more devoted or affectionate husband. . . .

We all join in kindest regards to yourself and Lady Jane. I allow myself to hope that you may yet come down; but wherever you are, may you increasingly know the blessedness of having the Lord for your portion.—Yours ever truly, T. ERSKINE.

271. TO THOMAS CARLYLE, ESQ.

38 CHARLOTTE SQUARE, 18*th April* 1857.

DEAR MR. CARLYLE,—The sight of your well-known handwriting was a real joy to me. I have felt the long interruption of all direct communication, and had often purposed writing to you or to Mrs. Carlyle, but had from day to day deferred it as the manner of man is. This was the more inexcusable as I had heard from worthy Mrs.

Braid[1] that Mrs. Carlyle, in whom she takes a mother's interest, had been ill. I am glad that she is now better, and in a condition to benefit by what of spring or summer may be before us. I really hope that the next visit you pay to Scotland you will come to us, and before that time I trust that this weary Fritz may be off your conscience and thrown on the consciences of other men, as incentive or warning as the truth of the matter may make him. I suppose that he shows us what a strong will and a clear insight without a conscience can do for a man. To me it is a most unpleasing spectacle—a German king confining his kinghood to leading armies, and extending frontiers and setting up *par gout* as a French wit and a ribald free-thinker. I would much rather be honest Mrs. Braid selling flour and bacon, and lovingly bearing the burden of her bed-rid son.

Yes, dear Mr. Carlyle, friends are getting fewer and fewer. Here I have scarcely one now out of my own immediate relations in whom I have the confidence of thorough intimacy except James Mackenzie, whose memory goes back and whose hope goes forward in pleasant music. Our University here narrowly missed getting Scott for Professor of Logic the other day, which I greatly lament both for her sake and ours. I believe the Free Kirk bears the sin of it.

My sisters, especially Mrs. Paterson, are and have been rather weakly. The loss in that house won't soon be forgotten. They think of you both with real affection, as I do.—Ever truly yours, T. ERSKINE.

[1] A remarkable woman, an old nurse of Mrs. Carlyle, living near Edinburgh, whom Mr. Erskine frequently visited.

272. TO LADY CAROLINE CHARTERIS.

MRS. PATERSON'S, CHURCH LANE, MORNINGSIDE,
EDINBURGH, 13*th May* 1857.

DEAR LADY CAROLINE,—We are in the act of packing up and leaving this house, where we have been for six months. Thus time passes away, full of precious things if we knew how to use them, full of words from God to us, put into the form of duties and trials, of joys and sorrows of every variety. And these words are all loving invitations to walk with our Father in close fellowship every step of the journey. You may have the satisfaction of knowing that you are missed by many here. I hope you may find much to please and help you where you now are. We dined yesterday with the Makellars, who had our old friend James Mackenzie to meet us. I regret that we did not make you acquainted with him this winter, for he is well worth knowing, and he cannot last very long now. You know that he is the son of the "Man of Feeling." He is full of affection, and has a very beautiful mind, enriched by the memories of all the remarkable persons who have lived in Scotland for the last sixty years. . . . I am to dine to-day at Douglas's Hotel with your friends the Maxwells. I suppose of course you will see a good deal of Lady Dalrymple and Patricia, to whom I send my love, as I do to your dear sister Lady Jane. I like your hymns very much. May God's blessing rest on you both.—Ever affectionately yours, T. ERSKINE.

273. TO THE SAME.

LINLATHEN, DUNDEE, 7*th July* 1857.

MY DEAR LADY CAROLINE,—Whether my eyes profit by the wise man's skill or not, I shall always feel that your kindness has been a real gain to me. I have very little to

say about my eyes. Their sight has always been perfectly good, but when I use them above an hour they become irritated and sub-inflammation comes on, and if I persevere they become so inflamed as to be unable to bear light at all, and I am obliged to lie by for a week or more. I cannot sleep unless light is thoroughly excluded; and as you know that there are few houses, either in England or in Germany, properly supplied with window-shutters, I am obliged when I travel to carry a thick plaid with me to fasten upon the windows. What the cause of this oversensibility of the eye is I never could get any one to explain to me. I daresay however it would be wiser for me to get an oculist to give me a scientific case for the Hofrath[1] to form his judgment on, and I shall go into Dundee in the hope of meeting some one who may help me to make out my case.

That prayer of St. Paul for the Ephesians to which you refer does indeed contain all that we can desire, and this we may be assured of, that it is the desire of God's own heart that it should be fulfilled in each one of us. True prayer is not an attempt to extort by importunity something from God which He is not willing to give us; it is rather to enter into the mind of God concerning us, and to open our hearts to receive from Him. As David says, "What reward shall I give unto the Lord? I will receive the cup of salvation." My affectionate regards to you both. I grudge you very much to that great Babylon.—Ever yours, T. ERSKINE.

274. TO THE SAME.

LINLATHEN, *14th August* 1857.

DEAR LADY CAROLINE,—Accept my warmest thanks for the kind interest you have taken in my case. . . . I think

[1] The German oculist.

that the Hofrath must be acquainted with similar cases to mine, otherwise, being an upright man, he would not have undertaken me so readily. It may please God through him to strengthen my eyes a little for the few days which still remain for me, but I am afraid to indulge too much hope. I wish to find the will of our Father, whatever it is to be, in itself life eternal. It is not in occupying myself with other men's thoughts that I am to find true enjoyment, but in entering into the purpose of God, and making His purpose my own. Thus only can we have in us "the well of water springing up unto eternal life." . . . I shall enter into my seventieth year in two months, and yet I sometimes feel as if I were a boy still, though at other times the sense of many wasted years presses like a heavy weight on me—years loitered away! Yet I have much reason to thank God for the existence which He has given me. I have learned to know that He has a Father's heart towards men, and that He has made and redeemed us that we might be partakers of His own holiness, His own character, and so of His own blessedness,—not a lower blessedness, but the same. Is it not a high calling, and ought we not to be diligent in following it out, encouraged and strengthened by the assurance that "He will never leave us nor forsake us"? I don't know whether you have any Indian friends in danger just now, but at all events you will feel for the sufferers and the mourners. We know several, and are looking with anxiety for letters by this last mail. I hope Lady Jane is quite well. I can understand your unwillingness to leave her, and hope that you have gained so much by former visits to Gräfrath that you can afford to stay at home. My sister Mrs. Paterson is very fragile, and subject to continual attacks of asthma, which is a most distressing companion. She and Mrs. Stirling join me in most affectionate regards to yourself and Lady Jane, and in the hope

that if you can afford us a visit you will give us one.—Ever truly and gratefully yours, T. ERSKINE.

275. TO MRS. BLACKWELL.[1]

LINLATHEN, 21*st Aug.* 1857.

DEAR FRIEND,—Your most interesting letter to Davie was received this morning, she being in bed, and Christian and I sitting by her. Christian read the letter aloud at the request of Davie, who had herself first read it alone. The memory of old bonds, and the ever-living affection which we found and felt in it, as springs of water in the heart of the writer, gladdened our hearts. There is a real eternity in everything which is good and lovely—a manifestation of Him who is eternal.

I was much interested in all that you said about Geneva, Coppet! and its inhabitants—the relics of that family which I knew there—present now to my mind, though invisible to the outward sense—Albertine Pauline Auguste, the most beautiful, and finally the most beatified spirit I have ever known. And I love the present lady for her own excellence, as well as because she is the representative of that other, and also of her own *mère angélique*, who was one of the choicest friends given me by God in this wilderness. Then Carra and the other Vernets, all dear for their mother's sake. Then beloved Gaussen and Merle, the first of these Genevese whom I saw at Hamburgh; and then the *beau lac*, and the Salève, and the distant Alps.

There was Lausanne also, and dear Vinet. It was an epoch in my life filled with precious treasure, on which I look back with much thankfulness. Indeed I often recall these persons and those days, to stir myself up to greater faithfulness in my walk with God. Jean Bost is an earnest

[1] Jane Lindsay Hepburn, daughter of Hepburn of Clerkington, and wife of the Rev. Mr. Blackwell, Somersetshire.

worker, and eminently gifted for his work. I am sorry to hear that the cause of religion is low in Geneva, and yet I cannot wonder that there should be a reaction against Calvinism. When first apprehended it is very impressive, but both reason and conscience witness against its details. It transforms the eternally righteous purpose of God into a decree. It thus changes the spirit into the letter. It then requires that man should know himself a believer to warrant him in trusting in God, instead of seeing that the trustworthiness of God is all the warrant for truth that man can ever have or can ever need. But the idea of election necessitates the demand for this prime qualification of faith. If they could but see that righteousness and love are one and the self-same thing, they would be delivered from much perplexity. Righteousness demands righteousness; it can be satisfied with nothing else. It cannot accept punishment instead of righteousness. If a man were to say to God, I would rather suffer any pain than subject myself to the restraints of holiness—righteousness, God would answer, 'I made you for holiness, and I must persevere in urging it upon you, until you accept it. There is no other blessedness possible for you, and I cannot rest satisfied with anything short of it.' Davie has hitherto been tolerably well, but she is beginning to have some of her bad symptoms. She and Christian asked me to write to you, and they join their love to mine.—Dear friend, yours affectionately, T. ERSKINE.

Give my loving regards to Madame Bunsen and her family.

276. TO MRS. SCHWABE.

LINLATHEN, *9th Sept.* 1857.

MY DEAR MRS. S.,—I have read the sermon of Mr. Martineau which you wished me to read. I have read

it with deep interest and much sympathy. I have felt along with him what a hopeless, desolate state men would be in, were they necessitated to scream out their wants and sorrows to a being separated from them by an impassable gulf; and I have also felt what a deadly chill it throws over the universe to substitute eternal laws for an infinite Father. I have indeed found that the only deliverance for man lies in the living union of God with humanity, and not an historical matter, but an eternal spiritual order. If Christianity be true, it must be the only real natural religion, that is, it must explain all the true spiritual and moral consciousness within us, just as the theory of Newton, if true, must explain all the phenomena of the heavenly bodies. The fact of conscience is the great spiritual fact in man's nature. Well, what is conscience? Is it merely part and parcel of myself? Christianity says that it is the presence of God's light, and life, and love, met by a spiritual capacity in us of apprehending it; and that it is there not as a spy or as a taskmaster, but as a loving guide, and helper, and comforter—that it is the divine spirit of sonship, to assure us of the unchangeable fatherliness of God's purpose towards us, and to accomplish that purpose in all who will yield themselves to it, making them indeed sons of God. This presence dwells in each of us, connecting us with each other, and connecting all with God; thus we are all specimens of that wonderful combination, God and man united, the divine element issuing out of God into us all, not direct from the great Father, but modified by passing through a human heart, and thus full of all holy human sympathies; that human heart is the heart of Jesus, the head and root of the race, our elder brother, like us, yet differing from us in this, that in us is seen the humanity indwelt by God, in Him is seen God assuming the humanity. He has passed through human life and human death bearing

all our burdens—the burden of our sins and the burden of our sorrows—the true Saviour, the true King, connected with every individual of the race, not only by a bond of love, but a bond of relation of brotherhood, a bond which can never be broken. He presents to us our Father's character, He presents to the Father His own accomplished idea and purpose in the creation of man; He stands in that relation to us, that He may make us like-minded to Himself; that is, that He may bring our wills into conformity with the Father's, not that they should be lost in that highest will, but that they may become loving and intelligent recipients of it. Thus only can the desire of God for man be accomplished; for thus only can man become a partaker of God's life, of God's blessedness; and all this without the danger of self-exaltation, for man is to continue always a receiver. There is, in my mind, something unspeakably sweet, and loving, and righteous in this constitution of things.

God does not give us each a private stock of wisdom and strength, by which we may work out an independent righteousness, on which we may stand and negotiate with Him and our fellow-creatures, but He creates us with a capacity of receiving or rejecting, and thus maintaining our moral responsibility, and then He wells out of His own infinite fulness the supply of all our needs, thus imparting to all His gifts the character of loving fellowship, like that father in the parable who said, Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine—were I to give you an independent provision it would break this loving bond. One feels too that it is righteous that the fountain should be acknowledged as the fountain; and thus we see that there is nothing arbitrary in the declaration that faith is man's righteousness. Faith means dependence, recipiency, and that assuredly is the only right place for man to occupy,

and thus only can he rise out of the religion of obedience into the religion of communion, as Mr. Martineau happily expresses it.

Dear Mrs. S., I took up my pen to tell you the impression made on me by Mr. Martineau's parting words, and instead of doing so, I have followed out a train of thought which those parting words awoke in me. I like what he says of the lesser religions, and also what he says of those who will not be actors and cannot be angels; but I have transgressed the common bounds of a letter, and must stop after one single criticism.

I wish Mr. Martineau had spoken more directly of the fatherly relation in which God stands to man; it is implied in much that he says, but it deserves constant inculcation, as it really constitutes the difference between the Law and the Gospel. Dear friend, I must ask you not to show this letter to any one, but just to keep it in your own thought and conscience. I have written it without any care, and on looking it over I see that it is not very accurate or logical, but that may pass with a friend; I believe it to be true.

277. TO MRS. BLACKWELL.

LINLATHEN, *10th Sept.* 1857.

MY DEAR FRIEND,— ... You will have heard of dear Lady Matilda's[1] sudden departure, and I am sure that you would think of us as fellow-mourners with her own family. She was a shining light, and many rejoiced in her light, receiving guidance and consolation from her. It would be well for us if we could learn to trust God as we trust those of our fellow-creatures whom we really believe to be good and loving. We could all name individuals, alive or dead,

[1] Lady Matilda Bruce, second daughter of Thomas, seventh Earl of Elgin, became, in 1839, the wife of Sir John Maxwell, Bart., of Pollok.

in whose love for us we had such confidence, that we should feel satisfied that our eternal interests would be quite safe in their hands, if they had only wisdom and power enough. If we believed that they had the requisite wisdom and power, we should receive every appointment, painful or otherwise, with perfect acquiescence, knowing that it must be for our true good. My daily endeavour is to learn this same lesson in relation to God. I am sure He created me and all men to be partakers in His own eternal life. This I believe is contained in the truth that He created us in Christ. Now this purpose of God I believe to be unchangeable, and that He will follow it on, until it be accomplished. The Shepherd goes after the lost sheep until he finds it. I am persuaded that this is an eternal truth, and the only foundation on which a man who feels himself a sinner—self-destroyed—can lay himself down all his length in absolute trust.

God is a teaching Father. He made me to teach me. "Thy hands have made me and fashioned me; give me understanding, that I may keep Thy commandments." And when I know this fully, when I apprehend that He would teach me to be like Himself in love and holiness—a partaker rather, I should say, in His very love and holiness, and of course His own blessedness—then I say this is just what I want. He wants to make me blessed, I want to be made blessed, and He knows the best way to do it. Let Him then do it; Lord, do it. Then instead of shunning God's searching eye, I can say, "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." I often feel as if my life had been a lie, and I know that I have inflicted cruel wounds on my own spirit, so that mere forgiveness would be nothing to me. I need healing as much as forgiveness. I need to know that that

Being, in whom and from whom I and all things else have their being, is indeed omnipotent, all-wise love; that He can deal with the roots of my being, infusing new life into me, His own life, and that though I have resisted Him, and done despite to the Spirit of grace, yet "He fainteth not, neither is weary." He perseveres in His gracious work until it is accomplished. He says, "Can a woman forget her sucking child? yea, she may forget, yet will not I forget thee." His purpose will be fulfilled in all on that day when it shall be said, "Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance."

Do not be afraid of what I have written, my dear friend. It is good news, but not too good to be true. It is the triumph of truth, and holiness, and love. It is the victory of Him who says to us, "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good."—Ever affectionately yours,

T. ERSKINE.

278. TO LADY CAROLINE CHARTERIS.

LINLATHEN, *19th Sept.* 1857.

YES, dear Lady Caroline, we cannot doubt but that her removal from this world was an entrance into a happier and brighter state, yet the loss to those who were used to lean on her and to get counsel and comfort from her must be great. I have almost never known any one so universally approved of, by persons of all descriptions, and certainly few have possessed so many loving and admiring friends. All who knew her loved her, and looked to her as something above the common reach of humanity. Dear Sir John must indeed be very desolate. I can realise those looks asking for sympathy and acknowledging it when given. I am glad that W. Stirling has such a mission given to him. It is good for the heart to try to

heal such wounds, to soothe such sorrows. He loved and prized her well, and he must feel that any consolation which can reach his uncle's heart at this time must come from behind the veil. And oh, what a full consolation it is to know assuredly that our Father's purpose is to make us all partakers of His own blessedness, by making us partakers in His own holiness,—that He made us and preserves us, and orders all events for us with this one end! This is the rock on which we may stand. This is what is revealed to us in Jesus Christ,—life coming out of death, joy coming out of sorrow. Farewell, dear friend. Mrs. P. is not very well, but she and Mrs. Stirling join me in much love to you and Lady Jane. T. ERSKINE.

279. TO MRS. BURNETT.

LINLATHEN, *7th Nov.* 1857.

WE had Mr. M'Murtrie[1] dining with us yesterday. He is a sweet-spirited man of a most prepossessing manner, both in public and in private. The grace of God doubtless operates on him; but by his natural character too he is most amiable. Some people are born with a cross, sulky, ungenial disposition. That is their school, their life-battle, and they have not only to contend with that inward enemy, but to bear up against the dislike of others which their ungainly manner draws upon them. The sweet-blooded people have a battle of another kind. They are tempted to find their portion in the universal sympathy and approbation which they meet with. This does not at first sight seem to be so great a danger as the other, but perhaps it is quite as seducing or more so. . . . —Yours affectionately,

T. E.

[1] Mr. Robertson's successor as minister of the parish of Mains, now of Edinburgh.

280. TO MR. MAURICE.

LINLATHEN, *24th Nov.* 1857.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—It is a long time since I have had direct communication with you. I am now, however, impelled to send you a word by the grateful feelings produced by reading your sermons for the day of humiliation and the following Sunday. I rejoice to read such things, and to know that they must be read by many. I wish our missionaries could read and understand them, that they might not weary themselves by attempting to displace one set of dogmas and substitute another, but that they might commend themselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God, by declaring the common Father, who is drawing all men into fellowship with Himself by that true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. If they claimed all honesty and truthfulness and kindness—every act of self-sacrificing generosity and uprightness—as Christianity, they could not fail meeting a response in every heart. They speak of traces of humanity being most visible in all faiths and forms—why not say that humanity is Christianity? For what else is it? Were there not that true light in man, were not the Son of God in him, where would his humanity be? And this, every man who feels the difference between himself and the brutes is not only capable of apprehending, but has a latent desire to apprehend. "Thou hearest His voice, but thou knowest not whence it cometh and whither it leadeth." And this great explanation is the charm which frees the man from his fears and selfishness and slavery to visible things. If Christ be that Word, that Light, then everything according with them is Christianity—not like Christianity, but actual Christianity.

I am glad to think that your trumpet gives no uncertain

sound. When shall we begin to realise that Christianity is not a religion got up either by God or man; but that it is the practical acknowledgment of man's actual condition as a spiritual being, of God's mind towards him, and of the relation in which he stands to God and to his fellow-creatures?

You have had much trial from the sufferings of those dear to you lately, with many alleviations from the hand and heart that appoints and sends them, I doubt not. . . . Ever yours affectionately, T. ERSKINE.

What a wonderful Psalm the 107th is—to explain what is the loving-kindness of the Lord! We go to Edinburgh next week—38 Charlotte Square.

281. TO MRS. SCHWABE.

38 CHARLOTTE SQUARE, 1*st Jan.* 1858.

MY DEAR MRS. S.,— . . . I am always glad to think of you as one who bears the burdens of others, desiring to be helpful where you can. May you live this year and for ever in the sense of the fatherly love of God, and of His high purpose manifested in Jesus Christ to make us partakers of His own will—His own life. This is my wish for you and your children. Jesus Christ is, I believe, God's ideal for man, the full expression of the purpose which He had in making man. God desired to make men His children, and the full expression of this desire is the divine Son, containing in Himself the spirit of Sonship for all men. This purpose of God is one with God, inseparable from God, and being the purpose in which man was made it is also one with man—inseparable from man. This is the living Word, the eternal Son, the root of man from God. Whoever denieth that Jesus, that loving Son of God and loving brother of man, is the true

Christ, the true ideal, rejects the counsel of God and refuses to be His child; whoever yields himself to this Christ, though he never heard the name of Jesus of Nazareth, is born of God, receives the spirit of adoption. I like to see by the mind's eye that divine Head and root of the race resting in every human spirit, like that ladder which Jacob saw in his dream, uniting him to God and seeking to enter into him and fill him with His own spirit. On this ladder the angels ascend and descend, the spiritual communications of God to man, and the aspirations of man to God.

282. TO MR. MAURICE.

38 CHARLOTTE SQUARE, 6 *Jan.* 1858.

MY DEAR MR. MAURICE,—Your Christian Ethics, for which I have to give you most earnest though tardy thanks, have been full of interest to me—good seed I should say, which I hope may bear good fruit in many hearts. I desire to know more and more the importance of learning Christ, rather than Christianity; the living, loving almighty Lord of our spirits, rather than the logic about Him. I have also to thank you for the sermons on India. I admire your unexhausted prolificness, and the beautiful ordering of the ἕν and the πολλά through your creation. . . .—Ever affectionately yours, T. ERSKINE.

283. TO MRS. BURNETT.

LINLATHEN, 13 *Sept.* 1858.

WE have had Mr. M'Murtrie with us for some days, and have been much pleased with his gentle, earnest ways. I have heard him once, and I trust that he may be a spiritual awakener and helper to many. We have had a great deal of conversation on the great subjects on which

a minister has to instruct his hearers, and he seems to feel deeply that he cannot instruct others in anything which his own heart has not learned first itself.

284. TO LADY CAROLINE CHARTERIS.

LINLATHEN, *6th Oct.* 1858.[1]

DEAR LADY CAROLINE,— . . . Poor Dean Ramsay! He is a kindly, sociable man, and he must feel his loneliness very much, and at present these painful disputes and trials amongst our Episcopalian clergy must harass his mind. Our bishop here did, I think, much evil in stirring the question,[2] which I believe in the minds of many people means just nothing at all. The consecration of the bread and wine cannot mean changing their nature, but simply using them in worship—using them, according to the last instructions of our Lord, in remembrance of Him. Faith means trust in our Father's loving purpose towards us in Jesus Christ, that we should be the living members of His body, partakers of the Divine nature. This is a faith which saves us from fear and worldliness and selfishness; and are we called to exchange this faith for faith in an unintelligible mystery, a necromancy, which says nothing either to the reason or to the heart? Such notions must make many infidels. I am going to Polloc on Friday. I may perhaps take a look of Noel Paton's picture as I pass through Edinburgh. Best regards to Lady Jane. My sister, Mrs. Paterson, has been worse these last days.—Yours most truly,

T. ERSKINE.

[1] "1858 was a sad year for the Dean. Mrs. Ramsay had been very ill, and sinking in strength and spirit till on the 23d July the afflicted husband makes this entry: 'It pleased God to visit me with the deep and terrible affliction of taking away my friend, companion, and adviser of twenty-nine years.'"—*Memoirs of Dean Ramsay*, by Cosmo Innes, p. 48.

[2] The question as to the Eucharist, raised at this time in the Scottish Episcopal Church by the Bishop of Brechin.—See *Life of Bishop Ewing.*

285. TO THE REV. J. M'LEOD CAMPBELL.

16 CHARLOTTE SQUARE, *7th Feb.* 1859.

DEAR BROTHER,—Jane Stirling died yesterday at eleven o'clock A.M., without a struggle. I cannot express what a loss I feel this to be to myself and to many, above all to Mrs. Erskine, who has been a mother as well as a sister to her during the greater part of her life. She clung to life till the very end, feeling that she had things to do which required her life, besides having a particular repugnance to the idea of death both for herself and for others. A few days before her death she said to her sister, "I had hoped to have rewarded all your care by getting well and by being very good, but I shall be very good in heaven." She had two months of great suffering. Her repugnance to death was not connected with any fear of what might follow death, for she had a perfect trust in her Father's love, but she regarded death as an enemy and usurper. She desired to be prayed for, and that her life should be prayed for. I believe that if we rightly apprehended our relation to Jesus Christ we might learn to feel as if death were already past and the resurrection-life begun—seeing ourselves in Him. Lately, when she sent her love to my sister Mrs. Stirling, she added, "I hope she may have an easy death."

We have within the last few days had accounts of the death of a daughter of Lady Lucy Grant in Borneo, a very triumphant death. What a wonderful variety there is in this respect! . . .—Ever affectionately yours,

T. ERSKINE.

286. TO MRS. SCHWABE.

16 CHARLOTTE SQUARE, *14th Feb.* 1859.

DEAR FRIEND,—How shall I tell you of the affliction it has pleased God to lay upon us? Jane Stirling has been

taken from this world, doubtless to her own great gain, and doubtless for our good, could we understand it aright. In the meantime, however, it is a deep sorrow, a removal of what was the light and joy of many hearts. She was ill for eight weeks, and suffered a great deal. . . . I know you will feel this deeply, for you could appreciate the purity and beauty of that stream of love which flowed through her whole life. I don't think that I ever knew any one who seemed more entirely to have given up self, and devoted her whole being to the good of others. I remember her birth like yesterday, and I never saw anything in her but what was lovable from the beginning to the end of her course. . . . It is a voice to us out of the invisible eternity, which we ought to seek to understand.

To a notification of this death sent by Mr. Erskine in a letter which has not been preserved, M. Gaussen instantly replied :—

TO MR. ERSKINE.

LES GROTTES, 15 *Février* 1859.

MON CHER AMI,—Que le Dieu de toute consolation se tienne au milieu de vous et ne vous quitte pas. Je le Lui ai demandé avec instance. J'ai reçu de votre communication un coup au cœur qu'il me serait impossible de vous exprimer. Vous me disiez de la faire connaître autour de moi ; je ne l'ai pu au premier moment, j'en étais trop ébranlé ; j'ai attendu le lendemain, et j'ai employé le reste de la journée à vous recommander vous et votre belle-sœur à Celui qui relève les abattus et qui recueille nos larmes dans ses vases. Cher Erskine, vous versez bien des larmes. Que je n'aurais pas connu celle que vous pleurez, votre douleur et celle de Madame Erskine, dans ce second veuvage (comme vous dites) me rempliraient de deuil. Mais je l'ai

connue, je l'ai admirée et respectée, je l'ai beaucoup aimée et je suis de ceux qui la pleurent pour eux-mêmes, et qui porteront jusqu'à la fin sa mémoire dans leur cœur. Je ne comprends que trop le vide qu' après son délogement la disparition d'un pareil être va laisser pour vous au milieu de ce monde ; et quoique j'eusse moi-même abandonné depuis longtemps l'espoir de la revoir ici-bas, ce sera toujours désormais une nouvelle souffrance de cœur que la pensée qu'elle n'est plus. Mais mon cher ami, et vous aussi pauvre chère Madame Erskine, que ce grand deuil vous ramène constamment à l'ami de Marthe, de Marie, et de Lazare. Il vous aimait aussi tous les trois, Thomas et les deux sœurs ; faites le chercher pour qu'il vienne à votre Béthanie. Il a pleuré avec vous ; il aimait votre Jane, cet être de droiture et dévouement ; il avait visiblement créé son image en elle, et il vous dit à vous aussi : "Jane, notre amie, dort ; mais j'en vais l'éveiller." Remettez la lui donc, jusqu' au très prochain jour de son retour, où ses rachetés seront enlevés ensemble au devant de lui en l'air, et où ils seront ainsi toujours avec le Seigneur. Il l'a retirée comme Dorcas, lorsqu' elle était toute pleine de bonnes œuvres qu'elle faisait. Beaucoup de veuves à Édimbourg et ailleurs pourraient présenter aujourd'hui en pleurant ce que cette Tabitha faisait pour elles, quand elle était avec elles. Elle se repose de ses travaux, et ses œuvres la suivent. Mais elle avait lavé et blanchi sa longue robe dans le sang de l'Agneau ; elle avait été marquée sur son front du sceau du Dieu vivant ; et cette âme si vraie et si humble, cette âme rachetée eût crié à grande voix, "que le salut vient de notre Dieu qui est assis sur le trône et de l'Agneau." Je suis humblement et tendrement reconnaissant que dans son lit de mort elle ait demandé qu'on m'écrivît. C'est un héritage qui restera jusqu'à la fin serré sur mon cœur. Chers amis, disons nous que le jour du Seigneur est proche.

"Encore tant soit peu, tant soit peu de temps (ἔτι γὰρ μικρὸν ὅσον ὅσον), et Celui qui doit venir sera venu." Cette pensée est d'un immense secours dans le deuil, unie à 1 Thes. iv. 17.

La semaine même de votre deuil j'avais eu la pensée toute pleine de tous les amis chrétiens que nous avons vus s'endormir dans le Seigneur. Le 6 Février, nous avions résolu de célébrer le dimanche suivant, la veille même du jour où votre lettre m'est arrivée (le 13), un jubilé de notre première entrée dans l'Oratoire 25 ans auparavant; et j'avais dû dès le 6 rechercher dans mes manuscrits le sermon que j'avais fait pour cette ouverture et l'imprimer. J'avais eu toute la semaine devant les yeux comme la sainte et solennelle procession de tous ces bienheureux chrétiens, qui, pendant ces 25 ans, nous ont précédés dans le repos de Dieu, qui nous y attendent, et qui pour la plupart vous ont tant aimé vous même, mon cher ami et frère. Monsieur Gabriel Cramer, sa bonne et pieuse femme qu'on trouva morte à genoux, l'admirable Madame Vernet et son aimable belle-fille dont le départ fut si beau et si touchant, Madame et Mademoiselle le Tort, ma précieuse et vénérable mère, et (il y a quatre semaines) la sainte et inappréciable Madame de Sortes. J'avais beaucoup, beaucoup répété toute la semaine: "Mon Dieu, prépare nous une place avec eux dans ta maison, et prépare-nous nous-mêmes pour cette place." Qu'il en soit ainsi pour vous, mon cher ami, et pour votre chère belle sœur! Que Dieu sanctifie vos larmes; qu'il vous multiplie la grâce et la paix; qu'il vous rende sa présence sensible, prochaine et puissante.—Votre ami affectionné, L. GAUSSEN.

Je désire que vous vouliez bien exprimer ma profonde sympathie à Lady Napier et au Capitaine Stirling.

287. TO MR. MAURICE.

LINLATHEN, 28*th June* 1859.

MY DEAR MAURICE,—I have to thank you for the renewed proof of your much-valued remembrance of me, which the arrival of Mr. Macmillan's packet has brought me. I feel the importance of your subject, and hope to feel it more deeply, more practically day by day. To live in the Spirit is the right condition of man, his normal condition, out of which he is out of order; and to live in the Spirit is to live with God—hearing Him, and knowing Him, and loving Him, and delighting to do His will. When I think how little I know of this order, or see it known by others, I do not wonder that some should think that there is no such order; and yet the man who makes this denial has occasional thoughts which make him feel that he has no right to make it; because, if there is an unknown God, there is also an unknown self, whose capacities he has not yet tried or measured.

"Thou hearest His voice, but knowest not whence it cometh and whither it leadeth; but he who is born of the Spirit does." And one may be born of the Spirit for a day, and relapse again into the abnormal state, and almost forget what he has seen and known in that day. "Abide in me," is the perfect law of liberty. I think that, if a man has once felt what the meaning of that word of our Lord is, "If thine eye offend thee," etc., that is to say, if he has felt that there are things in him, roots of evil and memories of their fruits, which must be cast out—else he keeps within him an unquenchable fire, which no sweet, oblivious antidote can ever purge his bosom of, which no mere forgiveness, even of God, can rid him of,—he must also feel that he can only have deliverance through a knowledge of God, which implies a participation in the divine nature

and the divine righteousness.—Yours ever affectionately, T. ERSKINE.

The voice of His judgments is heard through the nations and he that hath ears to hear let him hear.

288. TO MRS. BURNETT.

LINLATHEN, *24th Oct.* 1859.

WE have at present here a friend whose acquaintance we made abroad, a daughter of old Venn of Clapham.[1] She has been recently visiting those parts of Ireland where the awakenings have taken place, and most wonderful her narrative is. She is a very clever woman, as well as pious, and went there with the feeling that caution was necessary, so as not to be carried away by imagination or impulse, but she has come away with a full conviction that a great work of God is going on there, by which hundreds of all kinds and all ages have been brought from the kingdom of the flesh and the world into the kingdom of God. Some Roman Catholics had been struck down, who went through the general process of great humiliation and horror on account of sin, and then came to rejoice in God. The experience of these people is very like what took place under J. Wesley's preaching; many children, as young as nine years of age, have been also struck down, and Mrs. B. was as much impressed, or even more, with these as by any others. Give my kind regards to ——. I wish he could find the presence and fellowship of God a compensation for the want of human society. T. ERSKINE.

289. TO MR. MAURICE.

LINLATHEN, DUNDEE, *15th Nov.* 1860.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I knew Irving a little, but not enough to be able to give much help towards such a work

[1] Mrs. Batten.

as Mrs. Oliphant is undertaking. What is in my power, however, I shall be most happy to do. We intend to go to Edinburgh, 14 Charlotte Square, about the 1st December, for the winter. If she will call or send her address there, I shall wait on her. I should have liked to have seen the life of Irving written by one who had known him personally; for all that ever he did or said, although accurately given, would be a very inadequate expression of Edward Irving. Carlyle and Scott knew him well, and have very living portraits of him in their own hearts. Scott cannot speak of him without becoming Irving in voice and manner, even in countenance.

Scott is to deliver a course of lectures in Edinburgh this winter, and if his time coincides with Mrs. Oliphant's, she will have an opportunity of talking with him about Irving, which I am sure will be very gratifying to them both. Dear Mr. Maurice, could you not be of the party? Unless you come down, I cannot look forward to seeing you again; for I cannot go to London, and I feel that there are many things on which I should like to hear you speak, and to speak to you. Yes, this last year has been a wonderful year for Italy; and she has many struggles before her still. God gave her a great gift in Garibaldi, a gift which will yet more be needed, I doubt not, before long. The world has had a Rome before, but never an Italy, though many Italians. Will the fall of the Vicar lead to the manifestation of the Lord?—Yours ever affectionately,

T. ERSKINE.

290. TO DR. WYLIE OF CARLUKE.

. . . I HAVE been reading over Dr. Carlyle's (of Inveresk) autobiography with much shame and disgust. It is evident that at that time a large proportion of the clergy

of Scotland thought it their chief business to get associated with a circle of jovial, cheerful, clever companions, with whom they might eat good dinners and drink good claret when they could get them, and spend their lives with as little care and annoyance as possible. Unless one could hope that the spiritual education of these people was to go on after death, one could see nothing for them but the blackest horror. These were the instructors of the people of Scotland at that period in spiritual things, and they had no conception of the existence of a spiritual world, no thought of an actual presence of God in them. "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God." I remember the old man, with his beautiful grey locks; but what a picture does he give of himself and his friends! . . .

291. TO MRS. SCOTT.

LINLATHEN, *12th November* 1861.

DEAR MRS. SCOTT,—Your letter was a great treat, with its quotations from Mrs. Lucas and Mrs. Rich, both very precious. What indeed is so precious as the love of right hearts? the love of God coming to us through human channels! I hope dear Mrs. Lucas is now really well. I was happy to read Mrs. Rich's good words. It is long since I have either heard her voice or seen her handwriting, but I don't feel in the smallest degree less united to her than we used to be when circumstances brought us more in contact. It is curious to look back on life and contemplate our little theatres, with one set of actors succeeding another, and all passing out of sight behind that mysterious curtain. I wrote the other day to the Lausanne company. They are good and affectionate, and Vinet's character and intelligence were transfused through them all. When writing to them I thought of the other end of the lake, where I

had more friends and still deeper intimacies, but now vanished from the earth. I rejoice to hear that Mr. Scott is so strong and so up to his work. He and you are now old friends of mine. Sometimes it seems but yesterday since I first knew you, and sometimes it seems an eternity. Give my deep love to him. I have faith in his. I hope Johnny is getting on satisfactorily, and Susy. When you write to Mrs. Lucas, tell her that I love her well and value any kind thoughts from her and dear Miss Grace. We expect to be in Edinburgh, 41 Charlotte Square, in the course of ten days or a fortnight. My sister joins me in affectionate regards to you all. T. ERSKINE.

292. TO THE REV. THOMAS WRIGHT MATHEWS.

41 CHARLOTTE SQUARE, EDIN., 27*th Dec.* 1861.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,—Your history of mortality is very touching and solemnising,—your sister's death, and that sudden death of the lady, and then the death of the Prince, which will be and has been felt like a family sorrow in every home of the country. We need to realise that Christ is indeed our life—as the life of the vine is in its root. Though the idea of Christ being our substitute has been a darkness to the minds of many, yet surely it is a blessed truth, that in looking to Him we see the Father's purpose towards us, that we should be one with Him. And we see that pure and holy life, from which in all our wanderings, and all our fears and sorrows, we may draw our supply of strength and recovery and consolation, even as the branch from the vine. He is our peace and our hope of glory. . . .—Ever affectionately yours,

T. ERSKINE.

293. TO THE REV. ALEX. J. SCOTT.

41 CHARLOTTE SQUARE, *28th March* 1862.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—Mrs. Erskine has commissioned me to write to you of the death of our kind and worthy old friend Lord Torphichen. He died on Saturday last, in his ninety-second year; and this is the day of his funeral. You remember how much dear Jane Stirling loved and cherished him. Mrs. Erskine would have been with him this winter; but the exceeding sufferings and dangerous condition of Mr. Houston forced her to give herself up entirely to him. *He* can scarcely be expected to live out this year, though his vitality seems to have a wonderful power of resisting its enemy. I hope you are tolerably well, and yours. I don't write often, but I think often and much of you, and not seldom wish that I had the power of communicating with you in some more spiritual and direct way than by writing.

I forget whether you knew Mr. Cayley; he was a Parliamentary friend of Sir John Maxwell, who made us acquainted with him. He had been brought up a Unitarian, and was a most intelligent and amiable man. Sir John has been very weakly for a long time, and very dependent on society. Cayley came down to Polloc always during the Parliamentary vacations, and was his constant companion and never-failing resource. He was rather delicate, but he never at all gave me the idea of being near death, yet soon after he had left this—last month or in the end of January—for the purpose of meeting his constituents, he became seriously ill and died. I cannot tell you how much I was impressed by him whilst he was here in Edinburgh for three days, on his way south; he had a joy in God that filled him continually, and which seemed to astonish himself as much as it could do others. He had

found the pearl of great price. I have seen such sights, but they are rare. My sisters would join in affectionate regards to you all.—Ever truly yours,

T. ERSKINE.

294. TO LADY CAROLINE CHARTERIS.

LINLATHEN, DUNDEE, 20*th June* 1862.

DEAR LADY CAROLINE,—I must write you a line, were it only to let you know that I hold you in loving remembrance, and perhaps to draw forth from you some account of your own life in the south, and of the friends amongst whom you have your habitation. Our weather here has been exceedingly unfavourable for health and for outdoor enjoyment. Our aged friends have been diminished in number by it. This very morning I have an intimation of the death of old Mrs. Gillies. I don't know whether or not you were acquainted with her. She was considerably above eighty, and had had a paralytic stroke a year or two ago, but she was in full possession of her faculties, and had been through life a beautiful and amiable specimen of humanity. She had lived for the last years of her life, ever since the death of her husband, with a widowed sister, Mrs. Laing, who will now be very desolate, not only deprived of her much-prized companion, but perhaps even of many of those comforts which their united incomes allowed as palliatives of the infirmities of age. One may hope that it will be received by the old lady as a call from her Father to seek and find in His loving heart a perfect rest and a perfect consolation. But, to find rest or consolation in Him, we must cultivate a near and close acquaintanceship with Himself. We may know and believe that there is rest in Him, but we shall never find it until we know what it is to love Him and be loved by Him—until we have that

sympathy with Him in thought, feeling, and purpose, which one friend has with another,—until we know something of the answer to that prayer which St. Paul makes for the Ephesians in the third chapter, 15th and following verses, "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith," etc. Dear friend, let us seek these things patiently and constantly, assured that it is the good pleasure of our God to give them to us abundantly. Jane Makellar is here, and pretty well, though needing care. We expect Mrs. Paterson soon; her daughter-in-law, young Mrs. Paterson, is here to be confined. All join in love to you.—Dear friend, ever affectionately yours, T. ERSKINE.

Give our kindest regards to Lady Jane and the Colonel.

295. TO LADY AUGUSTA STANLEY.[1]

LINLATHEN, DUNDEE, 6*th July* 1862.

I KNOW what grief there must be—grief for your own loss, grief for the widow, and grief for your whole family under such a bereavement—a bereavement, though threatened, yet in fact sadder when it did come, of one so loved, and so worthy to be loved. It is, however, an unspeakable blessing to have known any whom we could truly love, and who, we knew, loved us, in whose hands we could have felt ourselves perfectly safe; who, we knew, wished for us that we should be good and right, above all other wishes—the knowledge of such a person is such a help to us to know God and to love Him and trust in Him. And when we do in any measure arrive at this trust in God, this trustful conviction that He without whom no sparrow falls to the ground is really occupied with the thought of making us good and right, that every event that happens to us, every circumstance of our existence, is chosen and appointed by

[1] On the death of her brother, the Hon. Robert Bruce.

Him for this very end,—when, I say, we do in any measure arrive at this trust, what an entire change comes over our whole being, and over all our estimate of things! Grief no doubt remains grief, but there is a Father's voice heard in it, telling us that nothing really precious can ever be lost, and that the removal of this much-loved friend is just a part of that wise training by which He would draw both the mourners and the mourned nearer to Himself. He would help us to set our affections on things above by removing the visible objects of our affections. He would help us to set our affections on that in our friends which belongs to the things above, and over which death has no power. It would seem sometimes as if all that the sufferer can arrive at is mere submission, a mere bowing of the head and heart to a will which is not understood; but something higher and happier than this is to be aimed at. The loving purpose of our Father in it is to be known and felt as love. Our Father Himself is to be met in it, and known in it, and sympathised with in it. Love seeks sympathy, and can be satisfied with nothing else; sympathy with God is partaking in the mind and blessedness of God. But we must know one well, very well indeed, in order to sympathise with him fully, and we must know God very well in order to sympathise with Him. We may know that there is a God, and that He is a loving Father, without knowing Him. We must know Him. Dear friend, I trust that this sorrow may be the means of drawing many to seek and find God, and to know Him as the one filling and satisfying portion of the souls which He has made. I am sure you will not think that I am intruding on you by writing to you at this time. I feel as if I were a near relation, and had a right to take part in the griefs and joys of your family. I never knew that loved brother, but I knew well how much he was valued, and how much he will be lamented. I feel

deeply for that widow, and I trust that light will for her shine out of darkness, and that a higher life may rise out of death.—Ever, with true affection, yours,

T. ERSKINE.

296. TO LADY AUGUSTA STANLEY.

LINLATHEN, DUNDEE, *July* 20, 1862.

DEARLY BELOVED,—I have read your kind letter over with a sense of great unworthiness. It seems to me almost like *wickedness* to hesitate about accepting an invitation so lovingly given, but I remember that I am half way between seventy and eighty, and I have always a fear upon me that something may occur which may make me a burden and a nuisance, and this feeling not only deters me from leaving home, but gives me a certain restlessness when I break through my rule. There are few faces that I like to see so well as yours, not only for its own dear sake, but because it is to me the *in memoriam* of another, the outward and visible sign, as it were, of something holy which has disappeared from this earth; so that it is from no lack of love that I decline. The only time I ever saw Broomhall was very long ago, long before you "*had arrived*," before even, I think, your father and mother were married. I went there with one or two of my Cardross cousins to see your father and his three little girls, whose faces I remember well. How many histories have commenced and terminated, outwardly at least, since then!

297. TO THE REV. J. M'LEOD CAMPBELL.

LINLATHEN, 1*st Oct.* 1862.

I HAVE been reading over the 12th, 13th, and 14th of 1st Corinthians. It is a very remarkable passage. Paul seems to have been almost as much troubled by these manifesta-

tions as Irving was, and he seems to have escaped by seeing that they did not stand in that authoritative place that Irving ascribed to them. The 19th verse of the 14th chapter gives me the same impression that I used to receive from a comparison of the Row teaching with the Port-Glasgow manifestations thirty-two years ago. He, Paul, seems really to have set little store comparatively by the manifestations in the Corinthian Church.—Ever affectionately yours, T. ERSKINE.

298. TO MR. MAURICE.

LINLATHEN, 11*th Oct.* 1862.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—We had lately the pleasure of seeing your young artilleryman[1] here, whom we found to be a very agreeable member of society, full of intelligence and information. We shall hope to see more of him when we go into Edinburgh for the winter, which will be in the beginning of November.

You, I suppose, are much occupied about Colenso's matters, which no doubt are difficult, and require the wisdom which is from above—that wisdom which teaches us *how* to bear one another's burdens—the burdens of Zooloos, and High Church and Low Church, etc. etc.

Our Lord taught men as they were able to bear it; and Moses, for the hardness of their hearts, allowed various things; but it is difficult to draw boundaries.

If the Bible is a book of teaching, it must contain matter for beginners as well as for the initiated; and yet to talk of degrees of spiritual truth is to some minds an entire subversion of authority, and we ought to bear the burden of such as well as of others.

An implicit faith, however, means no faith at all; it implies an entire ignoring of what our Lord meant to

[1] Captain Frederick Maurice.

teach when He said, "All who are of the truth are my subjects." . . .

A friend of mine died last week at the age of eighty-two, who had for fifty years suffered uninterruptedly from neuralgia.[1] Many years ago he told me that for twenty years he had never been so sound asleep as to lose the consciousness of suffering. He died praising God for His tender mercies, which had led him all his journey through. —Yours affectionately, T. ERSKINE.

299. TO MRS. BLACKWELL.

LINLATHEN, *15th Oct.* 1862.

DEAR FRIEND,—It is always with fresh pleasure and thankfulness that I receive your annual letter testifying to the faithfulness of your affection and memory. I see your face and hear your voice, and recall your father and mother, and uncle and aunts, and brothers and sisters, with the various localities and concomitants. The retrospect of life is always most suggestive of thought and feeling—so much to be thankful for, so much to mourn over and to be humbled for, such proofs and assurance of an overruling love and wisdom which have made stepping-stones of our sins and our blunders—"our dead selves," as Tennyson calls them,—by which we may walk to God. Within the last few months our circle has been considerably contracted. Lord Torphichen, William Stirling, one of Sylvester's daughters, and lastly, Ludovic Houston, who lived to the age of eighty-two years, in much suffering from continual neuralgia, and with much rejoicing in the goodness of God, —these all died in faith. . . .

It is sweet to think of such departures, though we feel the world emptier in consequence.—Affectionately yours,

T. ERSKINE.

[1] Ludovic Houston, Esq. of Johnstone Castle.

300. TO THE REV. THOMAS WRIGHT MATHEWS.

LINLATHEN, *4th Nov.* 1862.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—What a rest it is to the spirit to know that the Lord reigneth, and that He will put all evil under His feet! We are all getting on now to the end of our journey, and whilst I have to thank God for His unceasing love and care and goodness, yet I have to agree with you in saying that I can look back upon nothing in my whole life that I do not more or less condemn and grieve over. I am always thankful for the love and sympathy of any honest hearts, receiving them as the symbols of the inexhaustible patience and love of God, notwithstanding all my negligence and rebellion. That God created men that He might educate them into the fellowship of Christ, is my faith. And that the mountains may depart and the hills be removed, but that this purpose will never depart, is also my confidence. This publication by the Bishop of Natal on the non-historical character of the Exodus is a remarkable fact, which may shake much of that faith which does not rest on God alone. I grieve for it, and yet I believe the man to be an earnest and good man. I have myself always been seeking for a self-evidencing light in divine truth not resting on any authority whatever, but children must begin by trusting to authority, and throughout this land 999 out of every 1000 are children.—Yours affectionately, T. ERSKINE.

P.S.—Dear friend, I am as thoroughly persuaded as I am of my own existence that God will not be overcome of evil, but will overcome evil with good, and I am therefore not much disturbed by one or two difficult passages which seem to point to a different result. . . .

301. TO THE REV. J. M'LEOD CAMPBELL.

CHARLOTTE SQ., EDINR., *21st Nov.* 1862.

MY DEAR BROTHER,— . . . And now what shall I say about this most painful subject of Colenso? Such things have been suggested before by enemies; but here a friend, though it may be an unwise one, yet certainly one who desires to be a Christian and to promote Christianity, has published a work which seems to sap the foundation of traditional faith. That he has been rash I cannot doubt. He ought to have kept his MS. unprinted for years, subjecting it to the examination of all competent friends and philologians. His knowledge of Hebrew literature and philology cannot be great, having begun so lately. Then every one knows that numerals are most liable to be corrupted and miscopied. But we shall have opportunities of talking over these things at length when you come to Warriston. . . .—Believe me ever your loving brother,

T. ERSKINE.

302. TO THE REV. ALEX. J. SCOTT.

3 CHARLOTTE SQUARE, *11th Feb.* 1864.

. . . WHAT an immense change would be made in the conscious personal religion of men, as well as in their theology, by understanding that they were made to be educated, not to be tried; and therefore that trial is in order to education, not education in order to trial. Thou wilt not be overcome of evil, but wilt overcome evil with good. You were the person that showed me first how all Divine precepts testified to Divine character, and consequently how we are entitled to look to God for this optimism. And in analogy with this, how we are entitled and justified in applying to God everything that we have experienced of

amiable or conceived of amiable in our fellow-creatures. I am carried back to the shore of the Gareloch in 1830, when I walked and talked with you; and I am carried farther back, to my own brother, who died in the '16, and whose memory has been such a blessed help to me in my relation to Jesus, and my realisation of the character of God. "If ye then being evil, how much more." Is there not a real rest for man's spirit in this,—a rest upon a rock?

There are many things which I should like to talk with you about, and at some period there will be opportunity enough.—Ever affectionately yours, T. ERSKINE.

303. TO DEAN STANLEY.

3 CHARLOTTE SQUARE, *4th April* 1864.

MY DEAR DEAN STANLEY,— . . . Your Church seems to be in a sad mess at present,[1]—many truly earnest men afraid that the foundation of all their spiritual hopes is to be swept away by criticism, and forgetting that any revelation, whether inspired or uninspired, must owe its whole value to its being the discovery of truth which remains true independently of that revelation, and which can be profitable to us only in so far as it produces a conviction in our minds, from its own light, unaffected by the inspiration or non-inspiration of the revelation.

In this whole discussion there seems to me to lurk the idea that the dogmas of Christianity are imposed on us not as helps or guides, but as exercises of obedience and submission. I believe, on the contrary, that they are given for the purpose of explaining to us our relations with the spiritual world. What are the dogmas suited for domestic life? Suppose a man entering as a stranger into a house,

[1] Referring to the publication of *Essays and Reviews*.

from which he had been carried away as an infant, and needing guidance for his conduct there. The dogmas would be, "that old man is your father, that old woman your mother, these are uncles and aunts, brothers and sisters, there is an old servant who saved your life in your childhood," etc. etc. We don't know our duties apart from our relations, and the knowledge of our relations helps us to the performance as well as the knowledge of our duties. To suppose that such domestic truths are, in the case supposed, given as exercises of faith, and to be received whether understood or not, would be too absurd; and yet it would be less absurd than in the case of the Christian dogmas, because these are not merely facts, but the vehicles and expressions of principles, recognisable by our spiritual understanding, as eternal and necessary truths. Plato's doctrine of *ἀνάμνησις* would be a help to them, if they would use it. . . .—Ever truly yours, T. ERSKINE.

304. TO MRS. A. J. SCOTT.

3 CHARLOTTE SQUARE, 18*th April* 1864.

DEAR MRS. SCOTT,—I am glad to hear your good accounts of Mr. Scott. I hope that Brecon will have done him good, with its pleasant scenery and pleasant society; and I hope that your native air and outlook will have restrung your much-tried nervous system.

I am glad to think that Mr. Scott and you enter into my feeling of the great difference that there is between regarding life as a state of education and regarding it as a state of trial. If we take the latter view, however much we may endeavour to escape it, we cannot help looking on God as a Judge *chiefly*. According to the first view, His desire to bring us into sympathy with Himself becomes at once the comfort and the strength of our spirits. I

cannot doubt that Mr. Scott has read Renan's "Life of Jesus;" I should have liked to have talked with him about it. I am not satisfied with any of the reviews of it. I don't think that Renan's criticism is to be met by criticism, but by showing what an empty gospel he makes of it, and what a real gospel he puts away, and also by showing what a true rationalism there lies in what he rejects as untenable in reason.

God's training of spirits endowed with free-will into His own sympathy is evidently a higher thing than the ordering of the material world, and we ought not therefore to suppose that the plan of that training is to be subordinated to what we see or know of these lower laws. Renan has evidently never awakened to the consciousness of that tremendous capacity of suffering that exists in the heart of man, else he would feel the necessity of finding a remedy and a refuge in the heart of an almighty, all-wise, and all-loving Creator. Love is to Renan an object of tasteful admiration, not the one great spiritual power in the universe.

We are at present in a distress. We have the Bishop of Argyll with us, and he has been taken ill.

Give our kind regards to your sister from us all.—Yours affectionately, T. ERSKINE.

305. TO THE SAME.

LINLATHEN, 19*th July* 1864.

DEAR MRS. SCOTT,—I feel astonished as well as ashamed to compare the date of this letter with the date of yours, to which it purports to be an answer. I cannot tell you how precious yours was to me, with its enclosure. I have always retained much love and reverence (I would add) for the M'Callums.[1] I have often refreshed

[1] A family in Helensburgh, Row, among whom Mr. Campbell saw the first-fruits of his ministry, and to whom in consequence Mr. Erskine became

myself with thinking of them and their quiet walking with God. I have had also a confidence in their unbroken remembrance of me. I now sympathise with them in their sorrow and in their joy. They have seen their child trusting herself in her Father's hand, and feeling that it was good for her to be there. I was also much gratified by hearing that she had found help in the conviction that she and all of us were and are under the loving training of our heavenly Father, who brought us into being with the loving purpose of making us partakers of His own holiness. . . . In fact there can be no gospel to man so joyous as the announcement that God has created us that He might train us into a perfect righteousness. The manifestation of Jesus Christ is just the manifestation of that purpose, containing in it also the manifestation of what that righteousness really is. Thank Mr. Scott for his message of love. I am sure he knows how much I value it, and how much I believe in it and return it.

Perhaps you may now be at Buxton, but I send this to Manchester to make sure of you. Give my affectionate remembrance to your children and your sisters.—Very truly yours, T. ERSKINE.

particularly attached. Many years afterwards he wrote to Mr. Peter M'Callum :—

"13 SHANDWICK PLACE, *5th June* 1867.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—. . . I look back with much interest to the old days of the Row and the Gareloch, when our dear friend Mr. Campbell was strengthened to be a witness for the universal Fatherhood of God. There is still much darkness, but there is more light than there was. At the same time, we cannot think of it as light in the land, for it must enter into each individual heart before it is of any reality.

"I return you the letter which you enclosed, and which brought vividly back to me the feelings of that early time, which are and must be the same whenever the truth is perceived.

"I do not know how many or how few of your family survive, but I would through you send my kind and brotherly regards to all who know anything of me.—I remain yours truly, T. ERSKINE."

306. TO LADY AUGUSTA STANLEY.

31 CHARLOTTE SQUARE, 11*th Feb.* 1865.

DEARLY BELOVED,—I have received, and read, and sympathised with the lecture[1] which you had the kindness to send to me. I should like to have a talk with the author on the various subjects touched so well and lovingly in it.

There is a point which I have often wished to see more illustrated and enforced than it is generally, and that is the adaptation of the Christian dogma (when believed) to produce the Christian character. Paul speaks of the Gospel as being THE POWER *of God unto salvation*, that is, as containing the *dynamics*, so to speak, the spiritual lever, and ropes, and pulleys, and wheels by which the human spirit may be lifted out of the horrible pit and miry clay of sin and selfishness into a harmony with the mind of God, so that a real apprehension of the character of God and His purposes towards us, and our relation to Him, without any mention of the precepts, would spontaneously produce the life of them within our souls.

Renan complains of the Christian dogmas as encumbrances on the beautiful morality of the Sermon on the Mount, not considering whether it would be possible to obey those precepts by mere effort, and without knowing what the dogmas teach of the spiritual relations in which we stand both to God and man. A man could not possibly fulfil his duties as the member of a domestic circle, unless he knew what that circle was composed of, and what the place which he himself held in it. . . .—With kindest regards to the Dean, yours most affectionately,

T. ERSKINE.

[1] A lecture on the "Theology of the Nineteenth Century," by the Dean of Westminster, read at a meeting of the London clergy, the substance of which appeared in "Fraser's Magazine" for February 1865.

CHAPTER VI.

Records of a Visit to Linlathen in the Autumn of 1865.

MRS. RICH, whose name appears often in these pages, was the eldest daughter of Sir James Mackintosh, and the widow of one who, but for his early death, would perhaps have been equally well known. Claudius James Rich was the precursor of Layard and Rawlinson on the field of Oriental discovery, and as resident at Bagdad a protector so prized by an oppressed people that thirty years after his death a traveller on the Tigris, asking the meaning of some plaintive dirge sung by the peasants, learned that it was a lament for him. With him, in exclusion of all other society whatever but the visits of chance travellers, Mrs. Rich spent fourteen years of peculiar happiness and absorbing devotion, and his sudden death by cholera during a short absence of his wife's converted that happiness into a desolation as intense and unmitigated. She became acquainted with Mr. Erskine when the first profound grief had been complicated with others, and the devout life which had succeeded to the earlier phase of intense feeling had taken a strong hold upon her. Fifty years ago all religion which was at once manifest and intense was of that kind which is generally described as evangelical, and her first religious associations were formed with persons professing that form of Christian-

ity. It had much to attract, but much also to repel her, and her friendship with Mr. Erskine and Mr. Scott was the opening to her of a world where the intensity of belief in the invisible, the fervent hatred of sin, the profound belief in the enduring reality and supreme significance of the work of Christ, which are generally associated with that school, were joined to a confidence in the universality of the love of God and of its ultimate triumph in the case of every human spirit, which were at that time, and indeed are more or less at every time, apt to be associated with a low standard of holiness and a poor estimate of the spiritual life. Mrs. Rich felt it a great crisis in her life when Mr. Erskine whispered to her the wide hopes which, in the religious society of half a century ago, it was not easy and perhaps not desirable to express openly. She became one of his dearest friends, though in later life circumstances kept them much apart.

The following letters were addressed to her niece, Miss Wedgwood, who, happening to have been born in a snowstorm, had a name bestowed on her in the familiar parlance of family and friends, which the special affection he cherished for her led Mr. Erskine to employ :—

307. TO MISS WEDGWOOD.

POLLOC HOUSE, GLASGOW, 18*th May* 1865.

BELOVED SNOW,—I have read over your letter more than once with deep sympathy. I wish I could say anything that might help you. At all events, I know you are in the hands of One who can help you, and who not only sees these dark gropings in you, but who in a certain sense put them there. My own feelings of love and justice give me an assurance that He has them, that He is loving and just, and I am sure that love and justice must seek to

communicate themselves. When I am persuaded that a thing ought to be, I feel certain that it will be sooner or later —not that it will come of itself, but that God will not cease to press it until it is accomplished. I am sure that all the good which I feel the want of is in God, and that He makes me feel the want of it that I may look to Him for it with a confident expectation. I feel that we are created to be educated into a perfect sympathy with God, with the living personal Fountain of all goodness. Understand what I mean, that our education is not into absolute or independent goodness, but a goodness continually to be received through sympathy—fresh every moment—a well of water springing up into everlasting life, so that we may not only have the blessedness of the goodness, but also of that loving sympathy which is continually supplying it.

The evidence of a spiritual state which continually forces itself upon me is the demand which my conscience makes on me for qualities and feelings which would not be at all necessary, if this outward social order were all. To do actions beneficial to society and to abstain from actions hurtful to society would be enough; but love and holiness, and trust in an unseen, are demanded by my conscience, and are necessary for my peace, still more than any outward actions whatever, and I cannot meet these demands without knowing something of the nature of that spiritual world of which they are the natural laws. My whole being is a contradiction if there be not a spiritual world and if I do not belong to it. But it is impossible that my being should be a contradiction. I feel that goodness and truth and righteousness are realities, eternal realities, and that they cannot be abstractions or vapours floating in a spiritual atmosphere, but that they necessarily imply a living personal will, a good, loving, righteous God, in whose hands

we are perfectly safe, and who is guiding us by unfailing wisdom. I have known in my life two or three persons who, I knew, honestly and earnestly and unceasingly endeavoured to help me to be a right man; and now, in looking back on these persons, I feel what a deep confidence this purpose of theirs inspired me with, and I am conscious of having a similar confidence in God through all varieties in His treatment of me, because I have in my conscience the continual proof that He never for a moment relaxes His earnest purpose that I should be right.

Dear friend, I write these fragmentary sentences from the hope that you may catch hold of something in them which may help you to take hold of God. There is nothing else which can do us any good. If I believe in God, in a Being who made me, and fashioned me, and knows my wants and capacities and necessities, because He gave them to me, and who is perfectly good and loving, righteous, and perfectly wise and powerful, whatever my circumstances inward or outward may be, however thick the darkness which encompasses me, I yet can trust, yea, be assured, that all will be well, that He can draw light out of darkness, and make crooked things straight. Without such a thought of God, the consciousness of being embarked in an unending existence, out of which we cannot extricate ourselves, would be a horror insupportable, but I know that He can make it not only supportable, but a real and continual joy and a reason for continual thankfulness.

"Que mon âme vive qu'elle te loue." Dear Madame de Broglie used to repeat that verse the last year of her life as the chief expression of her feeling.

Yes, beloved Snow, we shall yet see a moral law of gravitation doing in the world of spirits that which the material law of gravitation does in this visible system of things; we yet shall see the infinite righteous love of God

attracting all hearts, and uniting them to Himself and to each other, and filling them all out of His fulness.

Farewell. I may be here for a few days longer; but Linlathen will be my proper address through the summer. —Ever yours very affectionately, T. ERSKINE.

I am just looking at some beautiful fragrant flowers, and they seem to me to say so much of the gentleness and tenderness of their Creator. What do they represent? Can we say when they are before us that we have no evidence of the love and righteousness of God? But still the demand of righteousness within us is the chiefest evidence, —an evidence which the dismal condition of the human race does not seem to me at all to shake. God is in no hurry, and man requires a long and varied process.

308. TO MISS WEDGWOOD.

LINLATHEN, DUNDEE, 12*th June* 1865.

MY DEAR SNOW,—I feel that what ought to be, must be, and is, so that when I am satisfied that a thing ought to be, I feel justified in regarding it as a reality. A universe without a right and good purpose in creating, sustaining, and guiding it, is a thing which I am sure ought not to be, and cannot be. I believe in good—in the existence of good. I cannot help believing in it; but I am sure good cannot exist without a will, and so I find that my belief in good actually implies my belief in God, the living Fountain of good.

Is my inner sense, my conscience, less to be trusted than my outward senses? Have I firmer reason to believe in an outward world than in an inward? I think not. I believe in the reality of goodness and rightness, at least as much as I do in the reality of earth and water. In fact, I

could not feel justified in ascribing reality to the outward world at all, in a true sense; it does not seem to have a necessary existence, as the other has.

The beauty and order of the material world seem to me to contain an assurance that in the higher region of creation, in the moral world, a similar order will yet take place, and must take place. I am sure that if all hearts were filled with righteous love, all the present confusion and misery would disappear from the earth. I see a preparation for this result in the capacity of love as a part of our organisation, and in the capacity of apprehending God as a centre of attraction. This is a very refreshing thought, dear Snow; look at it kindly and cordially. I cannot love that which is unloveable, directly, or in itself, but I can arrive at loving it through another. I cannot be right or happy till I love all men, and yet there is something exceedingly unloveable in almost all men. How am I to get over this difficulty? If I see that there is a God, and that there is a real loveableness in God, so that I can love Him, and if I see that He loves me, and all other unloveable men, with a love which desires to make me and them worthier both of His love and of each other's love, I can as it were ascend by the ray of love which comes from His heart to myself, and from that heart survey, in its own light, all the objects of its love, entering into its sympathies and longings and desires concerning them. This ought to be—therefore is.

I have just been engaged in a wonderful history. When I left Edinburgh three weeks ago, I went, as my habit has been for some years, to visit an old friend at his house in the country. He was a sufferer from rheumatic pains and from injuries sustained by falls in hunting in his earlier life; but he was in his usual health, having recovered from an influenza which had laid him up a short time before.

After I had been nearly a fortnight with him, and when I was preparing to come away, he pressed me to stay a day or two longer to see his nephew, an old friend and relative of mine whom he was expecting. I stayed a day or two, and saw him in the course of that time hurried out of life and laid out a corpse on his bed. I have scarcely been able to realise it—it seems like a troubled dream; the merely phenomenal character of all outward things has been pressed in upon me by it, whilst the deep eternal reality of God, and of our relation to Him, has commended itself to me more strongly.

I am very sensible that we can help each other very little in these matters, it seems a help which the Father of our spirits keeps in His own hand. But I regard all our instincts in that direction—our sense of need, our apprehension of what ought to be,—as really intimations from God, which it is our wisdom to cherish. Logic in this region, as you feel as much as I do (or indeed in any region), is not to be looked to as a discoverer of truth, but only as a supporter and confirmer of it when discovered by higher means. There is a passage in the third chapter of St. John which I feel often returning to me, as containing much instruction. It is in our Lord's conversation with Nicodemus. Nicodemus professes his belief in our Lord's mission, on the ground of His miracles. Our Lord puts that aside altogether, and says that no one can understand the truth of His doctrine except in so far as he is living in the spirit. Then Nicodemus asks how he is to get that life. Our Lord answers (ver. 8), The Spirit breathes within you—that is, conscience—and thou hearest his voice; but thou knowest not whence it cometh, or whither it goeth. That is, Thou knowest not the Speaker, it is the knowledge of Him which gives that life. I am ashamed of sending this very confused scrawl, but I feel as if my mind were

getting confused, so that I may have nothing better to send you.—Ever affectionately yours, T. ERSKINE.

The result of this correspondence was a visit paid to Linlathen in the month of September, of which a journal was kept by Miss Wedgwood, and transmitted to London with the object of bringing Mr. Erskine near to her aunt Mrs. Rich, as it proved for the last time in this world. Some extracts from this journal are now presented to the reader:—

LINLATHEN, 1865.

I think what I feel specially valuable in him, distinct from all other religious people I know, is his intense consciousness and realising of all the difficulties and mysteries of this life, combined with his perfect trust in the purpose of this life as education. I know others who have the last, and of course many many who have the first, but the union of the two I think I never saw but in him; he looks not across the mysterious gulf of evil merely, but through it. It is not any ignoring, any silence in his spirit about the hideous abyss, but it is seeing an object which makes all worth while, and a strength that can not only bridge it over, but change it. . . . I feel Mr. Erskine is always saying to himself, as indeed he has said once or twice since I came here, "It is the best thing that is offered each of us; we cannot see it, but it is the best thing." . . .

One thing reminded me of you so much—it was in speaking of the subject you and I have often discussed, of families separating,—and his words struck me, "It is neglecting the finger-posts," he said,—which seems to me so exactly what it is. In some rare cases, no doubt, a person may find a better path by neglecting the finger-posts, but almost never. I liked the way he dwelt on the blessing of our circumstances

being made for us, it is so much what one is tempted to forget just now: "It is a great evil to refuse to understand our circumstances, but we never shall understand them, or God's purpose in them, till we have become partners in effecting it. We do not first see the meaning of our education, and then yield to it, but we see it as we yield, or rather as we take up our share, for we must become active in it. And yet it is not all volition. There must be something in it that our will cannot produce."

He was speaking at one time of Judas, and the strange fact that to a sordid nature like his it should have been allotted to take care of the purse, so that it seemed as if God had encouraged what was wrong in him, giving him an opportunity of evil. "But then the opportunity of evil is the opportunity of good. The temptation may be made the deliverance. A friend of mine once repeated to me a sentence out of a sermon that he thought utter nonsense, but to me it seemed to have a meaning in it,—'What were rocks made for, my brethren? Even that mariners might avoid them!'" I rather agreed with his friend; but I saw what he meant by the words,—that there was a gain in having avoided rocks which there would not be in rocks never having existed. But he saw the Irishism of the saying of course very clearly.

Then another time he said a thing that struck me very much—I don't mean that I had never thought it myself, but the words as they came from him seemed fuller,—"Right is always right, and wrong always wrong, but the indications of right and wrong are very different, and vary from age to age; in our own day what we have to learn is that the indications of wrong (as we have thought them) may be found along with right and the indications of right along with wrong. There was a time when the watchword of a party was so closely linked with the reality that people

did not see the difference. I do not think it is so now; Paul preached *Jesus*. That word was enough then. Now it may mean anything." I cannot tell you how it impressed me, the way he said this; but perhaps I have hardly conveyed to you all that it meant for me.

Sept. 5, 1865.

We were speaking of the Bible, and the present critical spirit towards it. "I think," he said, "we shall learn to value the Bible more as we grow independent of it. I do value parts of the Bible exceedingly, but I do not feel that I depend upon it. When I find a small despised people from the first asserting a righteousness in the Divine Being which I do not find in the gods of more enlightened nations, I cannot feel that this is mere accident. This was the teaching of God. But then, when I come upon discrepancies in the narratives which are very definite and striking, neither can I ignore them, and I feel that *this* is not inspiration. The records are the vehicle of principles which are true independently of the records, and which criticism cannot touch." "But then," I said, "my difficulty is that I do not see how to reconcile the spirit that the Bible demands with the critical spirit of our time, and yet I feel that this last may be a right spirit; all that is valuable in our time is critical." "Yes, we cannot crush it, we must accept it. But the object of criticism is that which is variable. The object of faith is that which is unchanging, which is true *being*. Now I have no difficulty in receiving the fact of miracle. But if any one has, I do not conceive that he is thereby debarred from entering into the spirit of Christianity. The one is a fact, the other is a principle. The two things can never come into collision with each other." . . .

"When we are perplexed by the sight of creatures who

seem to be receiving no education, or worse than none, who are debased by all the suffering they have gone through, I think the only answer is to reflect upon the infinite variety of function that we are called upon to fill, and the infinite variety consequently of education necessary for this purpose. Christ is the head, and the members are various, each represented by numbers of human beings, and sometimes no doubt some seem in a very much lower position than others; but when we remember the oneness of life in which all partake there is nothing of degradation in that variety. All form one body, and every member of that body needs a different training. God knows the least necessities of each. Think of the number of infants that die under a year old. We cannot suppose they go *out of school*. Why should it be any difficulty to us that after a long life many should leave this world as much in need of prolonged discipline? Everything in our experience seems, if I may say so, to indicate something very lengthy. God is in no hurry with us, let us be in no hurry with Him." . . .

"I wonder it is not a greater difficulty in the theory of Renan, that the fourth Gospel contains no moral teaching at all. Every word which Jesus utters there refers to Himself. Now is it possible to feel any admiration for Him, and not to feel that the being who could speak thus must be more than man? If he is not God, he cannot be a good man. No mere man could use such language of himself, and retain his right to our reverence." . . .

I asked him about the passage, John x. 34, 36, which seems a difficulty in connection with this view.

"Yes, it seems like diluting His demands upon their reverence by taking the meaning of Divinity in a somewhat lower sense. I have never been able to understand it. But what is certain is, that we must interpret an

isolated passage in harmony with the general tenor of the book, and not *vice versa.*"

Sept. 6.

"It is no difficulty to me that so many people are placed in circumstances for which they are not fitted. I have felt all my life that I was in circumstances for which I was not fitted, and I see that this is necessary. Education would stop if we and our circumstances fitted each other. Failure is no difficulty to me, or rather there can be no failure; for the purpose of God is the training of the spirit, and this cannot fail. All that we are accustomed to value, all that we make an object of, is just mere gymnastics. It is nothing if it does not help forward this. For some the whole period of this life may be rightly taken up with learning their own evil, their own weakness. It may be necessary through many ages to plumb the depths of our own misery, that we may learn to know what the help of God means. I believe that we shall come to feel that all was worth while, that it is not too much to endure, if it had gone on for thousands of years, to bring us to an eternity of righteousness. Think of it—the love of God! We use those words very often, and get no comfort from them, but think what human love means,—a perfect oneness of sympathy and will with any very near friends, and imagine that purified and intensified to Infinitude! The depth of our misery now is to me a witness of the immensity of the blessing that makes all this worth while."

Sept. 7.

"I look upon Christianity as the revelation of recipiency, of the passive side of the character of God. I can conceive that the first preachers of Christianity understood this very incompletely. Paul—what a noble, heroic figure that

is! And yet we see that to him one great idea is the breaking down of the partition-wall between Jew and Gentile. That can no longer be a significant idea for us. There is no partition-wall, there is no caste any longer. Christianity develops itself to us on a different side from what he saw. We want to take hold of this ideal of recipiency. I have sometimes wondered what it is that makes Unitarians so dry and undevotional,—what great difference there can be between one form of belief and another. And I see it is just this, that they have not the element of devotion, which is this recipiency. They stand alone. They leave out the side of God on which He is accessible to us." . . .

"For my part, a miracle presents no difficulty to me; I feel the need of it so much. I feel most literally that there is no happiness for me that is not miraculous; nothing else would suffice for my happiness but a miracle.

(Speaking of the general notion of eternal punishment,) "I do not think that with holy men of old it was so much the idea of death being an end, as it was that we were all parts of a whole, and that progress was a thing for the *whole*. But I do not look upon it so much as a house that is to be built, as a set of bricks that are to be prepared. It is not a whole at all; it is a set of individuals that are each under special training. . . .

"All religion is in the change from He to Thou. It is a mere abstraction as long as it is He. Only with the Thou we know God."

Sept. 7.

DEAREST * * *,—I go on sending you from day to day what I can remember of the words that I know you so deeply value, and even if you do not find that in this form they convey anything, I shall not regret making the effort, for I find that the attempt to remember these words recalls

them to my mind, and, if not the exact words, so much as fills out the meaning of what he has been saying. As you must well know, there is something rather fragmentary and abrupt about his expression, with so many of those little *grunts* interpolated that mean so much when one gets to know him; it is as if the words were all too small, and what meaning overflowed their edge ran into these. I took a delightful drive with him yesterday to the edge of the ferry. It is very pleasant to see his great enjoyment in the face of nature, though he is so blind.

He has been asking about them all. It is rather formidable sometimes when he says "*What* is so and so?" He has great discrimination of character in some ways. He was talking a good deal of Mr. —— yesterday, and said how strange it was that with his great admiration of Socrates he had nothing of the Socratic dialectic method —that he never went *step* by *step* with any mind,—that he did not give him the idea of ever having been intimate with any one.

LINLATHEN, *Sept.* 10, 1865.

Mr. Erskine's mind seems to have been dwelling much lately on the analogy between the inward and the outward world, he has spoken so much of the force with which the spectacle of a universe regulated by the law of gravitation weighed upon him, as a token of the *one* principle which was to keep the spiritual world in order—that of love. . . . He seems to look upon the force of gravitation as a sort of parable of the influence of love—keeping everything together, keeping everything in movement which does not interfere with any other movement, keeping everything in its right place. Judaism, he said, he regarded as chiefly occupied with the orbit of the planet—Christianity as a revelation of its *centre*. "No human being," he said at one time, "is without lucid intervals

in which he would allow that the only good thing in life is love, and that every drop of sweetness comes from this. Christianity is the revelation of the fountain-head of all these scattered drops. It tells us that there is absolutely no other righteousness than love."

The greater part of this was said when we were walking to Broughty-Ferry, and I shall never forget one moment when he stopped to look up into the blue sky through a break in the clouds and said, "What a wonderful thing it is that light should *hide!* There are the stars—why do we not see them? Why do we not see God? He is here." He was of course thinking of Blanco White's sonnet,[1] of which he spoke with great admiration. He spoke some time on this, the unexpectedness of the means by which the stars were hidden from us, the impossibility of our ever guessing that anything was there but blue sky. I think his mind was dwelling on the possible surprise with which it might be that some who had looked earnestly for God and never found Him should see Him *emerge* as it were in some other state. He said distinctly, Atheism might be a misfortune, it might be a stage of education through which some spirits had to pass—that it might be

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1 "Mysterious Night! when our first Parent knew
Thee, from report divine, and heard thy name,
Did he not tremble for this lovely Frame,
This glorious canopy of Light and Blue?
Yet 'neath a curtain of translucent dew,
Bathed in the rays of the great setting Flame,
Hesperus with the Host of Heaven came,
And lo! Creation widened in Man's view.
Who could have thought such Darkness lay concealed
Within thy beams, O Sun! or who could find,
Whilst fly, and leaf, and insect stood revealed,
That to such countless Orbs thou mad'st us blind!
Why do we then shun Death with anxious strife?
If Light can thus deceive, wherefore not Life?"

the will of God for a time to hide Himself from them. I had asked Mr. E. how he would look at the mere *records* of Christianity. He said, "Though we must of course approach that narrative just like any other, yet to my feeling Christianity itself has more analogy with natural science than with history. It is a revelation of laws that are independent of facts. There must be a centre of gravity in the moral world, which when once found we shall be right, like the planets, not only as to that centre, but to everything else." He dwelt much upon the analogy of the outward world and the inward world: "The planets move in orderly circles because they have a right centre—we have disorderly motions, because we have a wrong centre. The way to get right is to get into the right place, not to go on trying very hard to be right where we are. It is not that by long trying we acquire the habit of right, and at last it gets easy to us: it is that we see the right way. I feel, 'If I had seen that, I could just as well have done it at first.'" . . .

I asked him what he felt the evidence of a spiritual world. He said, "It is that in us which is unsatisfied with what is necessary for the mere social order. Take the feeling of revenge. It is enough for my neighbour if I refrain from injuring him and perform actions beneficial to him. That satisfies all the conditions of the social order. But it is not enough for me. Something within me demands a feeling which is, for all outward result, utterly invisible. What is this but a witness that we are inhabitants of a world totally distinct from the mere social order? Think of it—something may be within us which no human eye can see, and yet which we are called upon to renounce. What does this mean? What *could* it mean, if we were inhabitants of a mere human world? Here would be a demand, and no one to make the demand, a summons with-

out a voice. I feel that righteousness implies will, that goodness is nothing if there is not a good *being*. The difference between the teaching of Christ and the teaching of all others—of the wisest and best, of Plato for instance—is, that they spoke of justice, and He spoke of the Just One."

Sept. 13, 1865.

Mr. Erskine spoke of the connection between Matt. vii. 1-5, "Judge not," etc., and the verses which follow, "Give not that which is holy to the dogs," etc.,—and then of the transition which seems in the ordinary acceptation of these later words so abrupt and almost contradictory, but which, as he understands it, is a harmonious development of the same idea. The instrument of judgment is the conscience; we judge ourselves by the conscience, and other men also, and the conscience is "that which is holy" in us; when therefore we pervert this holy thing in us to the service of malice, or of conceit, we are giving that which is holy unto the dogs, we are turning the good in us to the service of the evil in us, we are giving our light for the use of our own evil passions. The conscience is cast thus as pearls before swine, the upper is made to serve the lower, both being in ourselves.

In the same way another text, so often quoted, suffered, he thought, from being severed from what goes before, "Come unto me," etc. Christ has just explained why He can give us rest, because "no man knoweth the Father but the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him." "*Therefore*" come unto me and I will reveal Him, and thereby reveal unto you the only rest.

I said that what was perplexing to me in the New Testament was not a passage here and there, but the difficulty I felt in reconciling it with the whole fact of modern civilisation,—that it seemed at times as if this were

condemned by the Bible. "Oh no," he said, "there is no condemnation of civilisation in the Bible, only of that in civilisation which is idolatry;" he did not use that word, but I know it was something equivalent to it. "Christianity is *uncompromising*. It says with an infinite patience, but it says quite distinctly, 'There is only one good.' People now want to hear that there are many different sorts of good. I believe quite literally that it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven. It needs a miracle to keep us from living merely in the world of sense and of intellect, and bring us into that of spirit; to teach us that we are not sent here to assimilate the things about us, but to extract God's meaning from them. I have no belief in the progress of the species. The lesson of God does not seem to me so much to be contained *in* history as to be got at *through* history. It is not that by looking at outward events we shall see any manifestation of the righteousness of God. That is a common view, I know, but I cannot entertain it. Looking at things under that aspect, God often appears to be taking the part of unrighteousness. We must look upon it merely as the school for the training of individual spirits, that to each one individually the message shall come through that which as a whole seems to have no meaning. . . .

"I am much more sure of the being of a Righteous One than I am of the existence of those chairs. If any one should tell me they were a delusion I should not think it likely; I believe they are actual things. But the sense of this demand for righteousness is much nearer the core of my being than the outward world."

Sept. 20, 1865.

Mr. Erskine was speaking of Butler's Analogy, asking me about it, as it was so long since he had read it. He

went on to speak of the unreasonableness of those who were offended by difficulties in the Bible which unquestionably existed in the world. "Election," he said, "how unquestionable that is to any one who simply opens his eyes! The unamiable man may bend all his energy to subdue what is wrong, he may never relax the struggle with his unamiable tendencies, and yet with this utmost strain he will do a thousand unpleasant things which an amiable nature avoids without thought or effort. Nothing can be clearer than"—the inequality of advantage was what he meant, but I am not sure of the exact words. "Again, the sins of the fathers being visited on the children. The world teaches us that just as much as the Bible. The mind that finds these things in the Bible inconsistent with the righteousness of God cannot explain them away in the world. There is the same answer for both, that we are not to confound the process of education and its consummation. Whatever is righteous *is*, eternally is—there is no other faith in God but that—but not phenomenally is.

"I know that some people speak of the history of the world as exhibiting the triumph of good. I cannot see it; I see a process, I do not see it completed. The bricks are being fashioned, I do not see the house being built." I asked him if he looked for that ever in this world, and he said "No. We know in the art of healing how large a part of the process consists in making us apparently worse, how much evil must be turned into suffering before it can be removed. This is what we see going on. We see the evil being made manifest. Yet I believe that those who denounce the Bible as containing things inconsistent with the righteousness of God have sometimes hold of the most important truth, that all His doings must be righteous."

I asked him much about the Bible—what his view was

of its standing, as compared with other books. I put together as much as I can what he said at different times in very fragmentary sentences. "I look upon the history of the Jewish nation as presenting a type of the education of an individual soul, in a sense which would not be true of other nations. It is not a perfect type of this education. But yet it approaches it, in a manner which you could not say that Greek or Roman history does." "That is," said I, "that it was not specially the purpose of the Greek or the Roman education to teach those nations to know God?" "Yes, just so. The Jew was taught to recognise a righteous God. He was no better than his neighbours; in many ways he was worse. A Greek David would not, perhaps, have committed his crimes. But he recognised the righteous Being as they did not. How much sin there is in those bequests of David to his son" (the execution of Shimei, etc.), "but yet if we turn to the Psalms this same man acknowledges God, knows God, as the purer moral natures do not. And in the same way the Bible is given to us to help us to know God. We may know the Bible and not God, we may know God and not the Bible, but this is its aim; rightly used, it cannot fail of this."

I went on to ask him if he did not feel that this was specially the time to assert this true character of the Bible against the mistaken idea of its accuracy. I do not feel very clear of his answer; he seems always so much attracted to the one thought of the righteousness of God and our right attitude as mere recipients of that righteousness, that it seems difficult for him to avert his attention from it enough to think of anything that has no direct connection with it. I said, "Do we not want now to be delivered from an infallible book, as in the time of Luther from an infallible Church?" He said that certainly an infallible book was just the same kind of evil as an infallible Church. But

he seemed to think that his one great truth—the recipiency of man as moral rightness—was somewhat imperilled whenever this book was rejected as infallible,—that where men turned away from it, it was sometimes as wanting something of their own.

309. TO MISS WEDGWOOD.

LINLATHEN, *5th October* 1865.

BELOVED SNOW,—I thank God that He was pleased to give you any help through your visit to us. I have a perfect assurance that there is always infinite help and comfort in Him, and that all will finally come to know this; but I often feel desponding enough for the details. I hope you will learn, what I am always hoping to learn, to rejoice in God continually, knowing that He is really ordering all your circumstances to the one end of making you a partaker of His own goodness and bringing you within His own sympathy. I thank you for your love; it is most precious to me; and for your offer of service, which I should like to profit by if I knew how, but I am so stupid that I cannot receive help from another, —I need to do things in my own way, and yet I can't do them.

I am glad you are with Mrs. Rich; I should like well to be of the party. Give her our most affectionate regards. She has not many older friends now, or who love and value her more. My sisters send you their love. If we live a little longer we may perhaps see you again in this world.—Ever affectionately yours,

T. ERSKINE.

CHAPTER VII.

Letters of 1865 and 1866.

"ALTHOUGH there are many delightful residences in Scotland, and much delightful society, yet I can recall none which combined the charms of Polloc. There, particularly in his later days, Mr. Erskine was frequently to be found, more especially when, after Lady Matilda's death, Sir John was left in much bodily suffering to fight the battle of life alone, a battle which he fought bravely to the last."[1] And at the last Mr. Erskine was by his side,—the wonderful history given in his letter to Miss Wedgwood (see p. 157, 12th June) being that of his visit to Pollok, and Sir John Maxwell's death, which then occurred. Writing to Bishop Ewing on the funeral day, June 10th, Mr. Erskine says, "This is a great affliction. All who knew Sir John felt he filled a great space in their minds, and will probably feel this more, now that he is removed, than they had thought. I was thankful to have been here so as to have met his love again before he was taken home. But I felt most deeply my own unhelpfulness."

310. TO LADY AUGUSTA STANLEY.

LINLATHEN, *June* 1865.

YOU know already that our excellent friend has been relieved of his heavy burden. . . .

[1] Bishop Ewing's *Present Day Papers*, No. 16, pp. 15, 16.

The conflict was terminated on Monday morning, a little before six o'clock, and the place which he filled in the world is now empty. The place which he filled in the hearts of his friends is not empty, however; his simple upright loyalty of nature will never pass from the memories of those who have known him. He was a brother man, full of affection[1] and full of sympathy for the sorrows and privations of the poor. He deeply felt the responsibility of life, and of all worldly possessions and advantages. It is now eight years since that dear one[2] was taken away. I feel that it is only by abiding in God, in the spiritual realisation of His loving presence and care, that we can rightly receive these events. In that large hand all things are treasured up, and in that eternal purpose all things are carrying forward towards their desired haven. Farewell. —Ever affectionately yours, T. ERSKINE.

311. TO THE REV. DAVID RUSSELL.

LINLATHEN, 13*th June* 1865.

MY DEAR DAVID,[3]—(Excuse this liberty, I cannot give you any other than the old name,)—I have felt this to be a very solemn time. There were few people from whom I received so much love as Sir John, and though he was somewhat younger than I am, yet his infirmities made me always feel that the prospect of death was equally near to both of us, and our talk was often on that and kindred subjects. I had intended to have left Polloc on Wednesday or Thursday; but he first pressed me to stop to meet you, and then to meet Mr. Stirling. I little thought what it

[1] His nightly habit was to stand at the door after family worship and shake hands with each of the servants as they passed.

[2] Lady Matilda Maxwell, Lady Augusta's elder sister. See p. 121.

[3] Son of his old friend, the Rev. Dr. Russell of Dundee.

was to meet! How strongly does such an event press on us the importance and the preciousness of that one thing, "Christ in you, the hope of glory," and the *unimportance* of all other things, except in relation to this. Of course you will understand that I understand that word as describing the condition of every man, and as parallel to the word in Genesis, "God made man in His own image." We are members of the Head, whether living members or not; *but this high condition* of our creation is to us the assurance of our Father's loving purpose towards us, and is also the capacity in us of being really and spiritually partakers of the Divine nature, and fellow-workers with God in working out His gracious purpose. That Epistle to the Colossians has been always a special study of mine, and at such a season as this I find it, especially the third chapter, most edifying.

If you come to this country I hope you will come to us for a day or two, to recall the past and to realise the future. —Yours truly, T. ERSKINE.

312. TO BISHOP EWING.

LINLATHEN, *June* 20, 1865.

MY DEAR BISHOP,—Beloved Sir John, his face is seldom absent from me, and the thought of the way he would look at things constantly presents itself. I never loved a man so well, from whom I could expect so little sympathy in any of the trains of speculative thought which were peculiarly interesting and occupying to myself. But there was a substance of goodness and nobleness in his character which could both give and receive a deeper sympathy than mere thought could. I had given him a special place in my habitual prayers; so that now the remembrance of him always recurs at the stated times, and sometimes I find I

can commit him to the care and loving guidance of our Father, just as when he was with us. . . . —Ever affectionately yours, T. ERSKINE.

313. TO LADY CAROLINE CHARTERIS.

LINLATHEN, DUNDEE, 25*th July* 1865.

DEAR LADY CAROLINE,—Sir John's removal makes a great blank to many; I feel it as about the greatest loss I could have sustained, out of my own immediate family circle. He was so affectionate and so unremitting in his attentions; I had a note either from his own hand or from one of his many amanuenses almost every week, with some kindly word in it, and generally some upward aspiration in it which I felt it good to read. He was not one of the friends of my youth, but my long memory of Lady Matilda as it were embraced him and gave him the position of an old friend; I was thankful to have been with him these last days, though till the very end came I had not the least conception that they were the last days. How wonderful the separation made by death! We cannot learn from them what they have gone through and what they have seen! Every one of us must pass through that gate. The ever secure comfort to us is that the purpose of Him who made us is certainly that we should be righteous partakers of His own righteousness and His own blessedness. We cannot reasonably doubt this. We are sure that this is His desire and purpose for us all, and can we believe that He will ever give up that purpose? Impossible, He will persevere until we have this mind in us which was also in Christ Jesus. We belong to that spiritual world; *this* is not our home, and our truest wisdom is to live in the realisation that our Father's love, which always embraces

us, however unworthy, is the only satisfying portion of our souls, the only real happiness.

What you quote from Lady Matilda, about the kindness of God in allowing us to give and receive kindnesses to and from others, is very sweet. The love of God is to be like the centre of gravity in the material world, which not only attracts all things to itself, but unites them harmoniously to each other.

Do you know Lord Torphichen? This is his marriage-day. Poor fellow, he is an affectionate, honest-hearted man, and he is marrying a very superior woman, Helen Maitland, the daughter of Lord Dundrennan, a Lord of Session. They have both had a great deal of delicate health, and they have had the best opportunities of knowing each other well. We are in the course of receiving our summer visitors, and at this moment we have Mrs. Erskine, our sister-in-law, and the young family of Houstons of Johnstone, whom she takes charge of. Our sister Mrs. Paterson also is here—very well for her. Give our loves to Lady Dalrymple and Patricia and the Warrenders, if they are within your reach, and receive my true affection to yourself, dear kind friend.—Yours ever, T. ERSKINE.

314. TO MRS. RUSSELL GURNEY.

LINLATHEN, 1*st Nov.* 1865.

DEARLY BELOVED,—Your letters are always a balm to me. The idea that the All-wise Ruler should change His plans or purposes at the cry of His ignorant children seems quite preposterous, yet the language of our Lord Jesus is quite explicit in favour of such an idea. I do not feel much perplexed about it, although I find it difficult to follow out the steps. My way of understanding it is this: I believe that God's chief purpose in this world is to educate

and develop the spirits and minds of men, and that the higher part of this training can only be accomplished by teaching them to know and love Him as a personal Being, and that this result may be effected, and is intended to be effected, through what are called answers to prayer. When you were here, you may remember that I often spoke to you of what appeared to me the insufficiency of mere conscientious effort to produce that result on the character which is necessary for its highest rightness and harmony. Man must learn to love God in order to love all his unloveable fellow-creatures, and in order to have a right humility, and to love what is right as well as to approve of it. A sense of duty alone cannot produce these things. I have the conviction that if Renan and his friends once came to feel that they cannot be what they ought to be, that they cannot attain true rightness and true happiness without loving God as a person, they would be compelled to admit the reasonableness of Christianity, which is just the revelation of the personality of God, and of the love of Him as a person. Such a love alone is the law of gravitation for the spiritual world, for such a personal God is the only spiritual centre of gravity possible. Man is created capable of this perfection in goodness and blessedness, but this capacity can only be developed on the condition that God is a personal being, and that man learns to know Him and love Him as a personal being. My belief about answers to prayer is based upon this higher principle. Nothing can give us such a living sense of the personality of God as His answering our secret desires.

I should like to talk with your cousin on this subject; his printed letter is the expression of a very true-hearted man. My love to your dear, dear mother.—Ever with true affection yours, T. ERSKINE.

315. TO MRS A. J. SCOTT.

LINLATHEN, *6th Nov.* 1865.

DEAR MRS. SCOTT,—I am happy to think of my dear friend in that beautiful country, which contains so much that is fitted to tranquillise the heart. I lived once at Veytaux for a few weeks, and the picture of the head of the lake, and of the opposite side, the Meillerie I think they called it, often returns to me as a revelation of mercy and peace from the Creator. I have many cherished recollections connected with that country—of persons and circumstances, which make up a remarkable stratum of my life, to which I can still return with ever fresh interest. I have several such strata quite distinct from each other in their character and composition. One is the Gareloch, with the Row and Roseneath, in which Scott's figure appears; and the walks and talks I had with him return, not as fossil remains, but full of life. No section of my life, however, has been free from sorrow and remorse; and I can only feel reconciled to past memories by the belief that our heavenly Father has had, through the whole history, the purpose of educating my spirit, and teaching me to know Himself, as a friend who was perfectly to be depended on, and who had brought me into being, with a capacity of entering into His purposes, and sympathising with Him in them, and who had been seeking through life to develop that capacity in me,—I mean the capacity of sympathy with Himself. We are just preparing to go in to Edinburgh for the winter. Our summer has been most magnificent. We have had more fine days in it than in any year for the last half century at least.

Dear Mrs. Scott, give my loving regards and affectionate sympathies to your husband. My sister Mrs. Stirling adds her contribution of kind wishes, as Mrs.

Paterson would, if she were here, but she is in Edinburgh. —Yours affectionately, T. ERSKINE.

Of a visit paid by him to Mr. Erskine at this time, Dr. Campbell writes:—

DR. M'LEOD CAMPBELL TO HIS SON.

LAUREL BANK, *28th December* 1865.

I WENT, I think you know, to Edinburgh in consequence of an invitation from Mrs. Stirling, who thought her brother would be the better of a visit from me; and, in a letter to-day he says he has been; although feeling (as I too feel partly) that we had not made the most of our time—so much was left unsaid. We always breakfasted alone, and sat together for a while after breakfast, till we went up-stairs to have the reading of the Psalms and lessons of the day with Mrs. Stirling. We had had worship with the household before breakfast, Mr. Erskine always praying. (I prayed only on Sunday evening, when I also expounded at considerable length.) We were again alone together at night for a short time. Each day guests to dinner. Our parties were not large, and were easy and pleasant. . . .

My visit was to him, and its deepest interest was that which he gave it. We still do not see eye to eye in some things of deep moment; as to which my comfort was limited to the consciousness that I had been enabled simply to present my objections for his consideration. But in the great thing—the living faith that God is love—I have had, as usual, most quickening sympathy with my friend; and I have also felt that our intercourse, even when regarding what we see differently, was such as necessitated on my part,—as, I trust, on his also,—an inward uplooking in prayer, which raised one into the Invisible and Eternal,

and strengthened, by exercising it, direct faith in the living God. . . .

316. TO THE REV. J. M'LEOD CAMPBELL.

11 GREAT STUART ST., 17*th Jan.* 1866.

DEAR FRIEND AND BROTHER,—Enclosed is Mrs. Scott's announcement of her husband's death. To me it appears a merciful release of a wonderful prisoner, whose life for long has been a painful struggle. No man whom I have known has impressed me more than Scott,[1] and I have always received unchanging love from him. Poor Mrs. Scott will feel as if her occupation were gone.

Our life is hid with Christ in God.—Ever affectionately yours, T. ERSKINE.

He reckoned you and me his chief friends.

317. TO MRS. A. J. SCOTT.

18*th Jan.* 1866.

BELOVED MRS. SCOTT,—The cup that my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it? What a wonderful history is man's life! Great gifts given, and then apparently withdrawn, but surely only apparently, for the greatest gift of all remains as a pledge and assurance that nothing good can ever really be withdrawn. Thanks be to God for that unspeakable gift, in whom all others are gathered up.

I look back on my first acquaintance with him—in his youthful beauty—and with that rich endowment of mental

1 "*Laurel Bank*, 31*st January* 1866.—I was for ten days with dear Mr. Erskine, for which I was very thankful. You did not know our valued friend Scott, of whom Erskine says 'that he impressed him more than any other man had, and of whom I can say the same.'"—(Extract from letter of Dr. M'Leod Campbell to Bishop Ewing; *Memorials*, etc., vol. ii. p. 119, see also vol. i. p. 281.)

power and spiritual understanding. I recall my walks and talks with him by the side of the Gareloch; and the unfailing, loving, and admiring interest which I have ever since felt in himself and in his thoughts and movements. I remember him in that country where you now are, when I introduced him to Vinet and some of my Genevan friends. I remember his father telling me, with such approval and satisfaction, of his engagement to you, and himself taking me to see your brother, Alan Ker. I felt *him* to be a precious gift from God; I felt that he always took God's side in all his intercourse with his fellow-creatures. Dear Mrs. Scott! you know there is a great blessing intended for you in this deep sorrow. May the God of all grace help you to open your mouth wide, that you may lose none of it.

I thank you for writing to me. You will feel that Susie's being with him and with you at this time was a gracious appointment—as well as your dear sisters. After getting your letter I went to my sister, Mrs. Paterson, and Mrs. Erskine; how Jane would have felt it!—Ever affectionately yours, T. ERSKINE.

Mrs. Stirling desires to be remembered to you with her deep sympathy.

GREAT STUART STREET, EDINBURGH.

318. TO THE REV. J. M'LEOD CAMPBELL.

11 GREAT STUART ST., 19*th Jan.* 1866.

DEAR MR. CAMPBELL,—Our letters crossed. I know how much you will feel this death, the death of this very remarkable man, interesting to you in so many ways as a faithful, loving friend, as a profound thinker, as a spirit of noble dimensions.[1] When I first met him, he opened him-

[1] For a short notice of Mr. Scott, see Appendix No. I.

self to me, delighted apparently both to give and to receive confidence and intimacy.

I have found him somewhat changed in that respect, and yet I believe that it was no change of feeling, but a difficulty in his nature, for I have always felt that he gave me one of the first places in his friendship.

As to your own letter. When you speak to me of the love of God, I always feel sure that you mean a love which includes and implies righteousness, and I had hoped that you would interpret me in the same way. In fact I would say that, in contrasting the fatherhood of God with His judgeship, I meant *the first* to represent a righteousness which seeks to communicate itself, and the second a righteousness which seeks to vindicate itself, and I intended to say that the second was put in action, in subserviency to the first.

If you see Dr. Norman M'Leod, I wish you would tell him that I was much gratified by his sending me his address on "The Sabbath." I believe that he is contending for realities against shadows, which is always a good warfare. I have not answered or rather acknowledged it. I would do so if I could do it rightly.—Yours affectionately,

T. ERSKINE.

319. TO THE REV. WM. TAIT.

31 CHARLOTTE SQUARE, *7th Feb.* 1866.

DEAR OLD FRIEND,—Although I never think of you but as a youth, having before my mind's eye the form in which I knew you thirty-eight years ago, I am sorry for the cause that takes you to Pau, yet I hope that it may be for further good than the restoration of Mrs. Tait's health. When I hear of such a congregation as that which you describe, as given over to your ministrations for some months, I sometimes feel as if I should like to tell them

something myself. It was a curious gospel that Lucretius preached to the Romans of his time, "There are no gods," —*hurrah!* and yet it was a real gospel in his mind. He meant to tell them that in the government of the Universe there was no caprice nor favouritism, no selfish seeking for honours or sacrifices, no malice nor jealousy to be gratified, no Venus, nor Mars, nor Juno, who ruled the affairs of men for their own private views and piques and interests, and not on any general principle of good, but fixed eternal laws of justice and righteousness. I have a great sympathy with the old poet, and am sure that he would have welcomed a fuller gospel, if it had been suggested to him, a gospel declaring that not inexorable laws, however just and righteous, but a Being whose righteousness is love, guides and rules the Universe, and that His one unchangeable purpose in creating and sustaining man is to make him a partaker in His own blessedness, by making him a partaker in His own righteousness, and that all the events of life, the infinite variety and complication of joys and sorrows, and duties and relations, in which we find ourselves involved, constitute the education by which He would train and lead us to that great consummation. Whatever happens to us contains this loving purpose in it, and so may be welcomed by us as a manifestation of it, and should be studied by us that we may enter into all its meaning. For until we enter into it, and become fellow-workers with God in working out our own education, we remain unprofited by it. The purpose remains, but remains fruitless, so long as we remain neutrals or resisters of the work. There are few religious phrases that have had such a power of darkening men's minds, as to their true relation to God, as the common phrase that we are here in a state of probation—under trial, as it were. We are not in a state of trial, we are in a process of education, directed by

that eternal purpose of love which brought us into being. It is impossible to have a true confidence in God whilst we feel ourselves in a state of trial; we must necessarily regard Him, not as a Father, but as a Judge, and we must be occupied with the thought how we are to pass our trial. We know our own unworthiness, and though we know that we have a Saviour, there must still be a degree of alarm in the thought of that judgment-seat. But when we have once realised the idea that we are in a process of education, which God will carry on to its fulfilment, however long it may take, we feel that the loving purpose of our Father is ever resting on us, and that the events of life are not appointed as testing us, whether we will choose God's will or our own, but real lessons to train us into making the right choice. If probation is our thought, then forgiveness or receiving a favourable sentence is our object; if education is our thought, then progress in holiness is our object. If I believe myself in a state of education, every event, even death itself, becomes a manifestation of God's eternal purpose; on the probation system, Christ appears as the deliverer from a condemnation; on the education system He appears as the deliverer from sin itself.

My sister Mrs. Paterson often speaks of you, and likes to look back on past scenes—as well as forward. She had enjoyed your tract[1] very much, as also had Mrs. Stirling. I shall be most glad to make your son's acquaintance. Give our affectionate regards to your wife, and receive the same to yourself. Farewell, dear man.—Ever truly yours,

T. ERSKINE.

320. TO MISS WEDGWOOD.

11 GREAT STUART STREET, *16th Feb.* 1866.

MY DEAR SNOW,—I am glad that it was you who wrote that article on Scott. I should have welcomed it from any

[1] "The Open Latch."

one, but I am happy that it comes from one whom I know and love as I do you. When I first knew him he was very open and communicative, but he had then less to communicate, and what he had was less complicated, less dependent for its intelligibility on the understanding of many other things related to it. I often wondered at the number and variety of matters in which he evidently took interest, and which he had made himself master of, and yet I always felt that he never lost sight of the relation of each department to the great whole,—the place which it held in the hierarchy of things. I believe that God was a great reality to him. I am happy to think that you have pleasant remembrances of your visit, and hope that you may be inclined to repeat it. There are not many from whom I anticipate the same kind of sympathy that I do from you, and I feel that it is a great reason for thankfulness to find in a younger generation those who may in some measure fill the places that have become vacant.

Well-beloved Snow, may the blessing of God guide and comfort you.—Ever affectionately yours, T. ERSKINE.

Give my love to Mrs. Rich, and my best regards to your father and mother.

321. TO MRS. MACHAR.

EDINBURGH, *April* 1866.

THERE are few people now alive whom I have known longer than I have known you, and certainly there are none in whose regard I have more confidence. True love is divine love, coming from God and going to God. I am just now engaged in writing a work which I trust God will enable me to accomplish for the benefit of some of my fellow-creatures. I am exceedingly anxious to get through with it before my eyes fail, which must be soon, as it seems

the cataract is making rapid progress. I therefore grudge the time and eyesight spent on writing other things, and I feel it almost a duty to abstain from work of this kind. Pray God that I may seek God's glory alone, and may be preserved from seeking my own glory. I trust it may please God to scatter those Fenian raiders, and to use them as inducements for men to take refuge under the shadow of His wings. Our country is in a strange state. This Reform Bill seems like the breaking down of barriers so as to allow the inrush of all disorders. We want wisdom to govern us, not numerical majorities. True liberty consists in being delivered from our own vain passions and appetites and selfish will, and it would seem that many now think that liberty consists in the indulgence of these things, and that the restraint of these is slavery. Farewell, the Father's love be your dwelling-place.—Yours, etc., T. ERSKINE.

322. TO THE REV. THOMAS WRIGHT MATHEWS.

GREAT STUART STREET, EDINBURGH, 16*th April* 1866.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—You will be almost angry at my presuming to answer your respectable letter on such a contemptible piece of note-paper as this, but my capacity of writing is now much limited (by cataract in both eyes), and I am anxious, before I am quite blind, to finish an essay which I have now under my hand, and which I hope may by God's blessing be helpful to some of my fellow-creatures. This makes me brief in letter-writing. I believe that the fact of Carlyle being my guest whilst he was in Edinburgh for the purpose of being installed Lord Rector of the University was the chief reason of my being honoured with the LL.D. degree. Of course nobody calls me Dr., except for fun. Well, we are in the land of living men, amidst very wonderful things. Assuredly the light is advancing,

and I believe there are now more men in the country really devoted to the cause of truth, practically, than there have been at any former period, but the disorder is very great. Men forget that they are branches and not trees, and so the fruit is not of the right kind—wild grapes, . . .

T. ERSKINE.

MR. CARLYLE TO MR. ERSKINE.

SCOTSBRIG, ECCLEFECHAN, 17*th April* 1866.

DEAR MR. ERSKINE,—This is almost the first day I have had any composure; and I cannot but write you a little word of gratitude, to Mrs. Stirling and you, for your cordial reception of me in my late shipwrecked state, and your unwearied patience with me, during the whole of the late adventure. Now that it is all comfortably over, and a thing to look thankfully back upon, there is no feature of it prettier to me than that your kind chamber in the wall should have been my safe lodging-place (three "chambers" or almost four, as Cairns well knows!), and that there, with the very clock silenced for me, I should have been so affectionately sheltered.[1] Thanks for this, as for the crown of a long series of kindnesses, precious to remember for the rest of my days.

I intend home, probably Monday next—from Dumfries, my penult and one remaining shift. I sprained my ankle a week ago, but it is mending;—and otherwise the scene altogether is touching, tender, and mournfully beautiful to me. I wrote a little word to Lady Ruthven, as you suggested. I am still deepish in Notes, and ought to be in the woods of Springkell on my solitary rides of meditation rather.

With many grateful regards to Madam and yourself, I remain always yours sincerely, T. CARLYLE.

[1] See page 373.

323. TO MISS WEDGWOOD.

LINLATHEN, DUNDEE, 11*th Sept.* 1866.

BELOVED SNOW,—What you say of the non-historic view of Christianity given in all that I have written is in accordance with my own idea, yet not excluding the historic, but confirming it. The personality and character of Jesus Christ belong to the historical view, and constitute the chief part of the religion, but even these agree with and are supported by the philosophical view. Dear Snow, I desire to do good and not evil to you and to others by this work, and I am aware that the scientific and philosophic view has more to do with the intelligence than with the character, at least it may have more.

Farewell, dear daughter and governess.—Ever affectionately yours, T. ERSKINE.

324. TO THE SAME.

LINLATHEN, BROUGHTY-FERRY, 19*th Sept.* 1866.

BELOVED SNOW,—I hope you are persuaded of my deep sense of the filial services which you have rendered me, and of my devoted love to you. I miss you much, for myself and also for others. Mr. Campbell is now with us. I should have liked well that you had met him—he has such pleasure in communicating himself, and weighing all difficulties and suggestions. I never saw a man so liberal whose spirit is so solemnised. You rarely meet with these two qualities in combination.

We have had Jowett also, who is of a different type, but very good, being full of knowledge and political fervour on the Radical side, and thoroughly imbued with Plato.—Ever most affectionately yours, T. ERSKINE.

The day after this letter was written, Mr. Campbell himself writes :—

TO BISHOP EWING.

LINLATHEN, *20th Sept.* 1866.

. . . SINCE I came here I have been referring to my little book, *Christ the Bread of Life*, in conversation with Mr. Erskine, and am glad to find that his impression of its clearness and fulness agrees with my own. So I hope that in now re-reading it with the benefit of all your recent thought on the subject of transubstantiation you may find it satisfying. . . .

It is now the 24th, and I am finishing my letter after my return to Parkhill. I am thankful for another visit to Linlathen. I meet in no one the same full realisation of the gift of God as Eternal Life—the Life of Christ to be our life—that I see in Mr. Erskine; and this is a bond of the most sacred kind. . . .

325. TO THE REV. THOMAS WRIGHT MATHEWS.

19th Oct. 1866.

DEAR FRIEND,—I welcome your kind words and wishes. I am an old man now, seventy-eight years of age, oppressed by many memories of sin and sorrow, yet sustained by the assurance that the purpose of my God and my Father, His unchangeable purpose, is to conform me to the image of His Son. It has pleased God to give me, in the course of my pilgrimage, many loving friends, whom I receive from Him as testimonies of His own love, and among them I reckon you both. Your account of your Swiss expedition is very interesting. "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ," said Paul, because he saw that it contained the assurance of that blessed unchangeable purpose, and because

he felt that, whoever understood and believed that purpose, would certainly find in it all that his soul needed. Is that F. Newman the brother of the Roman Catholic? If so, I knew him once. I thought him a conscientious man, but I have grieved over one of his books, in which he makes strange criticisms on the moral character of Jesus.—Ever affectionately yours, T. ERSKINE.

326. TO MISS WEDGWOOD.

LINLATHEN, *5th November* 1866.

WELL-BELOVED GOVERNESS,—I am most grateful to you for your enduring love, which is to me of great price.

I rejoice in Maurice's appointment, thinking him the fittest man in the kingdom for the special chair, and moreover thinking that the infusion of his character into the thoughts of the young Cambridge men would be and will be an invaluable element in their education. He is a Felix Holt divinised, in one portion of his being, and how many portions has he, untouched by Felix? In comparing him to Felix, I mean merely to say that he is prepared to carry out all his convictions without any cowardly hesitations. As Erasmus described the difference between himself and Luther, when some flattering friend was giving him the first place, by saying, I can write, but Luther can burn. Maurice can do both.—Ever affectionately yours,

T. ERSKINE.

327. TO MRS. A. J. SCOTT.

16 CHARLOTTE SQUARE, *27th Nov.* 1866.

DEAR MRS. SCOTT,—How many thoughts are suggested by seeing a letter from you, dated Helensburgh! I do not think that I have been there since those days. And what changes! I can enter into your feelings in going over the

old letters of the family—all now departed. I remember Mr. Scott's feelings for his mother, and I remember her look of depth and fineness. . . . I saw the notice in the *Guardian*, I think, to which you refer. Those who can enter into the meaning of that volume[1] will regret that there is no more. My sister Mrs. Paterson is very well, surrounded by a bright circle of grandchildren. Mrs. Stirling not quite so well. You would feel Mr. Bonar's death; he was a good man, and loved by all who knew him.—Yours affectionately, T. ERSKINE.

My kindest regards to your sisters.

328. TO MISS WEDGWOOD.

16 CHARLOTTE SQUARE, 21*st Nov.* 1866.

BELOVED SNOW,—We have returned to Edinburgh for the winter, and I have been looking over my papers, where I find such an exhibition of kind and loving patience on your part towards me that I am quite overwhelmed. It would be a relief to me to think that you had got anything for yourself that could compensate your trouble, beyond the blessedness of goodness and kindness.

I return you my loving thanks and best wishes that the blessings which you need may be given to you.

My eyes are getting very dim, and I often fear that they will scarcely serve me to finish this weary book, which seems never to get nearer its conclusion, in spite of continual writing.

Miss Gourlay has begun her friendly ministrations, and we are asking our friends to tell us what books are worth reading. What do you recommend? How are all your people? Is Mrs. Rich come to town? I often think of the possibility of her losing Lady Inglis. Do you hear any-

[1] *Discourses*, by Alexander J. Scott.

thing of Claude, his health and his return? There is no man whose society I should like better to have—yet I know that I shall never have it, for even when he does return, he must live in London.

Ever affectionately and gratefully yours, T. E.

My loving regards to your mother.

CHAPTER VIII.

Letters on Select Subjects.

I.—PLYMOUTHISM.

330. TO MRS. BURNETT.

CADDER, 17*th March* 1840.

. . . WHAT you say about the Plymouth Church interests me very much. I have not seen much of them, but I have heard a good deal about them, and have known some of them. I am inclined to think them very confined, and too exclusive. They convert spiritual principles into formal rules, which seems to me a canker in the root of Christianity. Thus we read, "Love not the world, nor the things of the world;" this is a spiritual principle, which ought to be received into our hearts, so that God's judgment and favour, and not man's, in all things is to be considered and sought after under the influence of this principle. If I am really conscious to myself of a desire to do God's will, I may conform myself to every human decency, and to everything that is of good report, and even to every form or custom which is in itself indifferent and not sinful, and in doing this I am Christ's freeman, living not under a letter, but under a spiritual law. But when I interpret this "Love not the world" into a prohibition to conform to certain customs of dress or housekeeping or behaviour, I am turning the spirit into a letter, and although in my own particular case I may still be in the spirit and free,

yet in the case of others, who adopt my sentiments, the probability is that my judgment may in this matter weigh a good deal with them, and when we have formed a society on these views the general opinion of the society will in a great measure bind the consciences of the individual members, so that in truth the society comes between them and God, and thus becomes a "world" to them, as hurtful in its degree to their spiritual condition before God as the outer world can be.

I should also be disposed to think that the Plymouth Brethren do not form to themselves a large enough idea of human nature in its right state, and of the education which befits it. Thus, I could suppose that they would not like their children to read Shakespeare. I don't know this for a fact, but my idea of them suggests this supposition. Now, I think it is of immense importance to see that every movement towards the extension of man's capacities and faculties is in itself good, and may and ought to be made by the person who makes it, and to be studied by the person who studies it, to the Lord. There is nothing unholy in philosophy, or poetry, or knowledge, or art, or taste whatever in themselves, but only in prosecuting them in a selfish, independent, ungodly spirit. Christ has redeemed the whole humanity, the whole capacities and faculties of man, so that all our doings should be holy, whether we sing, or paint, or whatever we do. Religion should be a sap flowing through the branches of man's life, consecrating the whole of the products. Life is not divided into religious and secular parts; all should be religious, because it is a spirit and not a mere letter which God has bestowed on us in Christ. The world is a temple, or ought to be, and the business of life ought to be the services of a temple. Perhaps I have multiplied words here to excess, but I see much bondage produced by ignorance of this. When I read Plato or Shakespeare

in a spirit entirely different from that in which I allow myself to read the Bible, I am wrong. The testimony which the Plymouth Brethren bear against the conformity of the Church to the world, and against Christians spending their money as worldly people do, I entirely approve, and sympathise with in principle and spirit. The individual amongst them whom I knew best was and is painfully to me Calvinistic in his view of doctrines, limiting the love of God, etc. I don't know whether this is universal amongst them.

With regard to the extracts from Law, I don't much wonder at what you say, and yet I cannot help thinking that your objection is more against words than realities. You disapprove of saying of an unconverted man that "Christ is in him," or that "the Holy Spirit is in him." You say that such expressions are unscriptural, and give false ideas. But consider a moment Law's meaning. He means to say that a man who refuses to believe the truth of God, or to submit to the authority of God, is culpable in so doing. Now, why or how is he culpable? Simply because he might do otherwise. If he could not do otherwise we might pity him, but we could not blame him. The man is capable then of apprehending the truth and the authority of God. But how is he capable? Spiritual things can only be discerned by the Spirit. If the Spirit of God is not within his reach, so that he may make use of it in the apprehension of divine truth, he is incapable of apprehending it, and therefore cannot easily be considered responsible for not doing it. I am thus led to conclude that the Spirit is in such a way and sense present in every man, that the man, if he will yield himself up to its instruction, giving up his own self-wisdom, may so use it as to apprehend the things of God by it. And I believe further that the Spirit is there for that very end, and it is pressing itself on the attention and acceptance of every man, and that the man's continu-

ance in darkness and sin is in fact nothing else than a continued resistance to the Holy Spirit. It is in this sense that I understand the words of God to Noah, "My Spirit shall not always strive with man," etc., and Stephen's words to the Jews, "Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye." It is in the same sense also that I understand the whole book of Proverbs, "Wisdom crying to the sons of men;" "The spirit of a man is the candle of the Lord," etc. In this same sense also I understand Jesus standing at the door and knocking. Now, is it within a man or without a man that the Spirit strives with him? Where can he resist the Spirit of God but in his own heart? It appears to me that the difference between an unregenerate and a regenerate man is mainly this, that the first is resisting the Spirit of God which is striving with him, and the second is yielding himself up to be led by it. It is in him in a very different sense from what it was before—it has got into his will. I become a spiritual man by receiving the Spirit into my will, but I could not do that unless the Spirit had been there for me to receive it. It had been in me before, though not received into my will, the place which it seeks, the throne of my being, and my sin had consisted in shutting my will against its urgent knockings. Suppose the race of man to be one great tree (like a genealogical tree) with the roots, Adam and Christ. From each root a sap ascends and visits every branch and twig of the tree; the branches have the power of choosing which sap they will admit and which they will shut out. The old sap is in possession to begin with, but the heavenly sap presents itself at the door, and asks admittance, and has a witness within each branch that it ought to be admitted, and by its presence there confers a power on the branch of accepting its aid in expelling the old sap and giving itself

up to the new. Now, the Spirit of God is also the Spirit of Christ, and Christ is the channel through which all good things come to us. So that Law does not feel as if he were much wrong in calling the Spirit by the name of Christ, especially since it is it that is in us, in order that Christ may be born and formed in us in the higher sense, namely, by getting possession of the will. I am not anxious to make proselytes to phrases; but to the real presence of the Spirit of God in every man, striving with him for his good, and grieved when He is resisted, I do wish to make proselytes, believing it to be to the glory of God and to contain a loud call and a great hope for man. I believe that Law, when he calls on men to look inward, means merely to warn them of the necessity of applying to the Spirit, and of the impossibility of knowing anything about God but by the Spirit. He does not mean to refer them to any human faculty, far less to any frames or feelings of their own.—Your affectionate cousin, T. ERSKINE.

II.—PUSEYISM.

331. TO AN UNKNOWN CORRESPONDENT.

LINLATHEN, 30*th Jan.* 1841.

As you are now fairly settled at the fountainhead of Puseyism, and brought much into contact with persons and circumstances that may recommend it both to your imagination and understanding, I have thought that I might be acting the part of a friend towards you, by writing to you some thoughts on the subject, which might at least serve the purpose of making you weigh the matter well before you give your acquiescence to it.

You must yourself have felt that the first problem to be

solved in the formation of a sound system in politics, in morals, or in religion, is to reconcile the full and vigorous development of the individual man with that reverence for the authority of others which becomes him as a member of society. The right of private judgment, the refusal to receive simply on authority any principles or rules which affect our higher interest as moral, spiritual, immortal beings, the demand for personal satisfaction, the consciousness of a personal responsibility, which are the elements of individual development, and without which it cannot exist to any considerable degree, seem often to be, even by their right use as well as by their abuse, the occasion of the greatest confusions and disruptions of public order and tranquillity. And no doubt they are much exposed to abuse, that is, to be exercised without the control of principle, the honest purpose of doing what is right, and being thus abused, they tend really to injure the character of the individual, as well as to hurt society. The thought of this may well make us hesitate about allowing too much scope to the individual independent judgment, as tending to strengthen the selfish independency of the will. We know also that submission to a rightful authority, as in the case of children for example, is most favourable to the growth of the character, intellectual as well as moral, up to a certain point at least. We see thus that there are two things good for man, but that it is difficult to have them both. Must we forego one of them? and if so which of them are we to forego?

But it may be said, we need not really forego any good thing, for has it not been admitted that submission to a rightful authority is, at least in the case of children—and if in their case, why not in all cases?—more nourishing to the whole character than any independent, ungoverned movements of the individual will. But here another question

comes in, What is a rightful authority? When I come myself to feel the difference between right and wrong, ought I to regard any authority as rightful which commands me to act in contradiction to what I feel to be right? Does not this very consciousness of knowing what is right lift me out, as far as those things are concerned in which I discern a positive right, from under any other authority than the Fountain of right—than God? Does not this consciousness impel me, and strengthen me, in the face of all human judgment, to appeal to a greater than they? and ought I not to consider this voice within me as claiming me to be under his own particular authority? more especially if I come from some obscure consciousness within me to the belief that, although I have only on these few remarkable occasions heard the voice, yet it is in truth always speaking in me and assuming a direction of me on the most minute as well as on the greatest occasions? What right have I then to give myself up implicitly to another director? If God is really speaking to me, I can have a right to submit to another authority only when it accords or perhaps does not discord with His authority in my conscience. Besides, it is surely true that God puts me whilst a child under my parents, only whilst my conscience is growing, with the purpose of teaching me the habit of looking upward for direction and strength, and not with the purpose that I should never look higher. Surely all inferior authorities are appointed to train us to the knowledge of the Supreme authority, and not to supplant it. But the habit of taking the opinion or judgment of a man or of a Church as a sufficient ground for conduct after we have passed childhood and have arrived at the period when we ought ourselves to hold communion with God, must tend very much to keep conscience asleep, or in a very low condition.

My conscience witnesses to me, as a child, that I should obey my parents. Well, how far should this obedience go? Surely not the length of making me do what I see distinctly to be wrong. "Children, obey your parents, in the Lord,"—that is, I suppose, as far as you see their command to be in accord with the Lord's will. Authority is good and useful when it is used for bringing us into a condition in which we may ourselves see what we ought to do, without other direction. It is a part of the education of conscience. A child's education consists mainly in choosing between the authority of its parent and its own inclination, but the education of men consists much in choosing between the authority of God and the authority of man. It will not stand us in stead to say, My father is God's ordinance to me, therefore I may obey him in anything without fear of going wrong.

The use of submission to authority seems to me chiefly to lie in this, that by it I am delivered from self-will, and so put into a condition of judging rightly, although that judgment may be in opposition to the authority to which I submit myself. Jesus said, I know that my judgment is true, because I seek not mine own will, but the will of Him that sent me. When I cease to seek mine own will I am in a condition to form a just judgment, and the habit of obedience helps us to that cessation. The parent is an ordinance, the pastor is an ordinance, the church is an ordinance, but personal spiritual communion with God, holiness and righteousness, are not ordinances, but the things for which ordinances are appointed. The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. It is not enough that I see the ordinance to be of God's appointment: I must see also that that which comes to me through it is of His will.

I must not take it for granted that because the ordinance

is of God's Divine appointment all that comes to me through it is also divine. Here then I must exercise private judgment; I must judge my ordinance, my pastor, my parent, etc.; I must do it whether I will or not, if I do not consent to have altogether a second-hand religion. I think Puseyism is wrong, in the way which I have now described, in the view which it takes of authority and ordinances. I think that its root is the same with that of Popery, only it has not gone so far. Quakerism is its supplement, its opposite pole—necessary to complete it. It denies the light which lighteth every man, and thus it is forced to set up authority in its place. But when submission to authority is thus set up in the place of conscience it becomes itself, not a means but an end—not an assistance to education, but the condition aimed at in all education, and thus righteousness is really annihilated, or at least contracted into mere obedience. And how, without an original light, can I judge of the rightness or wrongness of an authority? Am I to take the authority that comes first? How do the pastors know it? have they an inward light, and they only? The author of the review of Carlyle in the *Quarterly* evidently thinks that men ought to have been content to have remained in the lowest state of degradation rather than to have taken the initiative of reformation out of the hands of the Church into their own. This is really denying the cup to the laity,—the wine, the blood, the life,—and condemning them to be merely a passive substance to be animated by the clergy, the living part.

It appears to me that Puseyism as well as Irvingism is a return to Judaism; an outside thing instead of an inside thing. I am well aware that we cannot have a religion so altogether spiritual as to be independent of outward forms, but I think that Christianity aims at the highest degree of spirituality, and that this is the explanation why the New

Testament writers are so sparing in their directions as to forms of any kind. They wish to implant principles which may lead to their own results. They put down the centres of circles, but they draw no circumferences. I believe that one form is good for one time, and that another is good for another. When I read Matthew and John, and compare them together, I cannot but recognise two very different intellectual forms at least of the same religion. I am persuaded that those who go into Puseyism are either led by the poetry of it—and there is much poetry in it,—or by that desire to get rid of doubt and responsibility, and of the necessity of personal judgment and of a personal exercise of conscience, which has led many before into Catholicism.

If we wish to be perfect men in Christ Jesus we must consent to bear our own responsibility—and does not the apostle say, "Every man must bear his own burden"? referring, as it appears to me, to this very subject.

T. E.

III.—THE FORENSIC THEORY OF JUSTIFICATION.

332. TO THE REV. PATON J. GLOAG, D.D.

March 1858.

REV. SIR,—I have looked through your works on Justification by Faith, and on the Assurance of Salvation,[1] and I venture to communicate to you some of the thoughts which they have suggested to me, persuaded that you will receive them candidly and kindly, not rejecting them unweighed because they do not altogether agree with what you have been accustomed to consider the orthodox standard. I observe, from what you say in the beginning of the 184th

[1] These works, written by Dr. Gloag, now minister of Galashiels, had been brought under Mr. Erskine's notice by a common friend.

page of the larger work, that you have felt the difficulty connected with the common theory, although you have got over it. You have felt the difficulty of believing that there could be anything conventional or arbitrary in God's dealings with man, in the spiritual education of him. Every thinking man must have felt it; and many, I am sure, have been compelled to reject the common theory, whether they have arrived at any other which satisfied them or not. Let me propose a solution. Does not the true rightness of man consist in an absolute submissive dependence on God as a loving Father, who is continually, by His Spirit within and His providence without, seeking to bring us into an entire conformity with His own will? Does it not consist in such a dependence as the branch has on the vine, living by the sap thence received? Does not man's wrongness consist in his following his own independent will, in acting from his own resources, in living under the power of self? Faith, confidence, dependence, is the name for man's turning from himself to God. "Trust in the Lord with all thy heart, and lean not to thine own understanding; in all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He will direct thy paths." This faith is man's right condition, and it is the righteousness of Christ, as the sap in the branch is the sap from the vine. When I entirely trust in another, so as to surrender myself to his guidance, the righteousness of that other is communicated to me. This is, I believe, the δικαιοσύνη which is by faith, the righteousness of faith. There is a δικαιοσύνη which is on all men whether they believe it or not, the manifestation of the loving purpose of God toward them in Jesus Christ, but which does not become δικαιοσύνη, righteousness, until it is received by faith, the spiritual apprehension.

I believe that the Son of God, the eternal Word, is the original foundation and ground of man's being; that man

is in the image of God because created in Him who is the express image of the Father; that man's acting as if he were his own or had anything of his own, and not as existing in Christ, is his fall and unrighteousness; but that does not and cannot get him off the deep original ground of his being. I believe that as Christ is the ground of man's being, and is actually in every man as the supplier of spiritual life, so He is also the Head of man, of the whole race of man, acting for the race, not at all as their substitute, but as their Head and root; doing things, not instead of them, but for them, as the root does things for the branches.

I have no belief in the forensic theory, which seems to me founded on a mistaken conception of God's relation to man. It supposes that God's chief relation to man is that of a judge, and that the relations of Father and teacher must suit themselves to it, in subordination to it; whereas I am convinced that it is just the contrary. The forensic system supposes that God made men that He may afterwards judge them; I believe that He judges them that He may teach them, so that His judgments are instructions. I believe that God created man that He might instruct him into a conformity with His own character, and so make him a partner of His own life, the eternal life which is His will or character. This view of the purpose of God in man's creation makes an important change in our feelings with regard to the Law. Whilst I regard God as my Judge the law is an object of fear, and the higher its standard the greater is that fear; whereas if I regard God as my Fatherly teacher, seeking to make me a partaker in His blessedness by making me partaker in His holiness, I am delighted with the contemplation of the high standard to which He is using means to elevate me, and instead of shunning this searching eye, I desire to expose myself to it,

knowing that it is the eye not of a taskmaster who is seeking occasion against me, but the eye of a loving, spiritual physician who is searching into my disease in order to cure it. The 139th Psalm is a beautiful exemplification of the effect of this apprehension of God and His purpose towards us. David, conscious of much sin and pollution, welcomes the gaze of God, assured that His object is to lead him in the way everlasting. When I am sure that God's one and sole purpose towards me is to deliver me from everything that can separate me from Himself and His eternal blessedness, I can lay myself down with absolute security in His hand, receiving His discipline in whatever form it comes, saying, "Search me, O Lord, and know my heart; try me and know my ways, and lead me in the way everlasting."

I believe that this state of spiritual being is the true justification by faith and the true assurance of salvation, and that these can never be produced by any feeling that we have complied with any condition, either faith or obedience (which, in fact, come to the same thing), but that they can only be produced by seeing in the character of God that thorough fatherliness on which we can place a perfect reliance, and by discovering that His purpose for us is just what we most desire for ourselves. I find it most sweet when I can thus rest on the eternal love of my Father's heart, sweeter far than to rest on any thought (most dubious at best) that I have fulfilled a prescribed condition of either faith or obedience, and sweeter also than to rest on the idea of a legal transaction by which my debt to God has been paid. I wish to owe Him all, to owe Him a debt of love which never can be paid. If I believed in the forensic theory I should feel that in coming to it from the 139th Psalm I had come from a higher, holier ground to a lower and less holy, which I am sure is impossible in the progress of divine revelation.

Jesus is the Revealer of the Father, and His doings have their chief value in discovering to us the everlasting Fountain out of which they flowed. It seems to me that at every step of His earthly course we should hear Him saying, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father;" and what were all these steps but a varied manifestation of the desire to seek and to save the lost? What were they but varied expressions of sympathy for man pressed down by sin and sorrow? So the miraculous cures are less considered by the evangelists as acts of power than as acts of compassion, tokens of sympathy (Matt. viii. 17). And thus He revealed the Father. And in that touching invitation which concludes the 11th chapter of the same book the true meaning of the whole passage is missed unless we see its connection with the last clause of the 27th verse, "Neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him;" and now come unto me, for I am the Son ready to reveal the Father, and so to give you rest.

But I must stop, for I shall be writing you a book and not a letter if I go on. One thing, however, I should be sorry to omit, which is, that the forensic theory has a direct tendency to make men think that salvation consists in the removal of a penalty instead of a deliverance from sin. I am persuaded that it has had that effect on the minds of our population very universally.

And now, dear sir, hoping and trusting that you will interpret kindly both what I have written and my purpose in writing, I subscribe myself your obedient servant,

T. ERSKINE.

P.S.—When I use the phrase "forensic theory," I mean that theory of the work of Christ which contains the idea that God is compelled by His own essential justice to

punish sin, and to punish it as an infinite offence because it is committed against His own infinite excellence, and that in order to evade this necessity, which would involve the perdition of the whole race, He has had recourse to substitutional imputation. It seems to me that there is a mistake at the very foundation of all this. I do not believe that justice ever is, or can be, satisfied with punishment. I believe that the justice of God is the righteousness of God, and that His righteousness requires righteousness in man, and can be satisfied with nothing else, and that punishment is God's protest that He is not satisfied. But it is evident that if this be so the judicial office is incomplete in itself, and must be subordinate to the teaching office, so that the condemnation of wrong may minister to the inculcation and acquisition of right.

I can see many causes for the marked unfruitfulness of religious instruction amongst us, but I am persuaded that the chief are that the judicial character of God is made to swallow up and conceal His paternal character; that thus Christ is viewed as a refuge from the Father instead of the way to Him, and that the Law is represented as a standard by which we are to be tried and condemned, instead of a standard to which it is the purpose of God to raise and draw us up. I believe that the true assurance of salvation is unattainable where such thoughts exist and prevail. Finally, I believe that we are all called and elected to eternal life, but that we may frustrate the counsel of God, and that therefore we are exhorted to make our calling and election sure, not to make ourselves sure that we are called and elected, but to make our undoubted calling and election *βεβαίαν*, firm, solid, as Æschines said of the democracy. The democracy existed, but it might be made sure, or it might be sapped by the factious oligarchy.

Farewell, dear sir; I trust you will not think me either presumptuous or officious in thus writing to you.

T. ERSKINE.

IV.—THE BIBLE.

Among Mr. Erskine's papers was the copy of this letter addressed by him to Bishop Colenso, without a date :—

332. TO BISHOP COLENSO.

MY DEAR LORD,—I could not satisfy my own conscience if I did not make some acknowledgment of your kindness in sending me your remarks on the Bishop of Capetown's proceedings in relation to you.

Of course I agree entirely with you in your view of the legality of the Metropolitan's claims, and not only as to what the law actually is, but what in reason and righteousness it ought to be.

But further, I agree with you on a much more important matter, namely, the meaning and purpose of authority in all true teaching. I am sure that so long as we believe anything that is of the nature of a principle merely on outward authority, be it the authority either of God or man, without discerning for ourselves its own truth, we are not truly believing it. We may be believing the veracity and the wisdom of our informer, but we are not believing in the truth of the thing he made known to us, until we discern that truth. If I am to be saved or spiritually healed by a truth, I must have my spirit brought into contact with the quality and character and reality of that truth, so as to be affected by it in accordance with its proper nature,—and any faith which is not fitted to do this is not that which I need.

The object of all true teaching is to make us independent of authority; and to reduce all belief into submissive obedience is as great a blunder in religion as it is in common sense. I cannot become loving or pure or humble by mere obedience. I must perceive the excellency of love and purity and humility. I believe that the most strenuous advocate for authority would admit, that if the Bible and the Koran were put at the same time into any one's hands, and he were called on to make choice between the two religions, he ought to be able to see that the Bible contained more and higher truth than the other. And if it is granted that man ought to judge rightly in such a case, it must also be granted that he has the capacity of discerning truth in spiritual things, which capacity it is the purpose of all religious teaching to cultivate.

The value of the Bible, according to my reason and conscience, consists in what it contains,—in the truth which I find in it,—not in the manner in which it was composed. I cannot fully estimate what it has been to myself or to my race. From the history of human thought I see that there has been hardly any true apprehension of the nature and character of God, or of our relation to Him, out of the pale of its influence. That this light should have been enjoyed by that small tribe, and that it should have been continued amongst them through a succession of teachers, whilst even Greece and Rome were comparatively dark until enlightened through them, seems to suggest that there must have been the interposition of a supernatural agency. But I believe this on account of the truth which I find. I do not believe in the truth on account of the supernatural agency; and yet after having been constrained to recognise that supernatural agency, I feel that I am not justified in reading the Bible as if I had made no such discovery. It will still remain true that I cannot believe till I discern

truth, but I shall read with a reverent thought that though I do not yet see it, there is truth there, if I could see it.

From your quotation in page 14, I gather that you look on the Bible very much as I do; and as you doubtless acknowledge that all education must begin with some form of authority, you will also feel the importance of avoiding everything which is likely to shake the confidence of those multitudes who, you know, will never advance beyond authority all their lives. Whether you have actually and in your writings been sufficiently careful here, is the point on which many whose views on the nature and use of authority in all teaching, and especially in religious teaching, are the same as your own, yet differ from you. You seem to me to think that those who agree with you on this subject of authority, and also acknowledge that there must be very considerable truth in the critical conclusions as to the history and composition of the Old Testament books at which you have arrived, ought also consistently to approve of your publications on these books. But you may be mistaken. If all the religious teachers of this country, or even a large proportion of them, did really in their teaching address the conscience and reason of their people, so that the people were accustomed to this kind of thought, I do not believe that your books could have excited any alarm; but you know well that this is not the case, and that conventional notions on religion are the common notions of the country, and that, generally speaking, Christianity itself is identified with, and is supposed to stand on nothing else than, the belief of the verbal inspiration of the Bible. This wrong state of things ought certainly to be corrected as speedily as possible. But by what means? By denouncing the error, or by guiding the people into the truth? It is a difficult question, because it must be a question of degree.

I feel that I shrink from what you have done, and yet I can conceive your acting perfectly conscientiously. When I think of your criticisms I often seem to hear the voice of the Great Teacher saying, "I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now," as a call to thoughtful tenderness for our brethren. I sometimes also consider whether you are prepared yourself for the results of such criticisms on the New Testament.

I remain, my dear Lord, with best wishes, yours faithfully,

T. ERSKINE.

I do not feel myself justified in saying anything by merely knowing that it is true; I feel bound to look to its probable effects on those who hear it.

333. TO PROFESSOR LORIMER.

HOTEL, GRANTON, 14*th July* 1858.

DEAR SIR,—It was with no small interest that I read over those sheets.[1] It seems to me most important to understand the place which the Scriptures really occupy, that so we may make the use of them which they were intended to serve, and be delivered from any superstitious feelings about them. This is specially needed here in Scotland, where a belief in the Bible is often substituted for faith in God, and a man is considered religious, not because he walks with God in his spirit, but because he acknowledges and maintains the verbal inspiration of the sacred canon. I have seen people brought up in this way who would have felt their whole faith in spiritual things annihilated by the discovery of any contradiction or inaccuracy in the Gospel history. A faith of this kind, which rests on ignorance and which is dispelled by knowledge, is certainly not the kind of faith which we should desire

[1] Some sheets of a volume on the "Inspiration of the Scriptures," by Dr. John Muir, who endowed the Sanscrit Chair—transmitted to Mr. Erskine, to obtain his opinion of it.

either for ourselves or others. The most lamentable infidelity cannot fail to be the result of it. I agree also with the author of these sheets, that it is desirable that laymen should take up the study of the Scriptures, as they may be expected to be less fettered by prejudice than those who have been brought up within the limits of articles and confessions of faith.

I feel all this, but there is another principle which is perhaps liable to be forgotten amidst such thoughts, and it is this, that no man can successfully study spiritual truth except in a spirit of reverence. If a man approaches the New Testament as he might approach a new book on geology or botany he will certainly fail to understand it. Solomon has well said, "The scorner seeketh wisdom, and findeth it not." His mind in a self-conceited or even a careless state (I mean morally careless) cannot comprehend wisdom. All spiritual truth is addressed to the conscience in man, and is only understood by the conscience; and if the conscience is not in action the truth is to him like light grasped by the hand instead of received by the eye. A grammarian or logician, in the exercise of his function, is apt to overlook this, and to forget that there may be meanings in the words or reasonings which he is handling that require the co-operation of another faculty.

I believe that ninety-nine out of a hundred of the religious people of Scotland believe in the verbal inspiration of the Bible, and would have their faith shaken to pieces by the facts which your friend adduces in those sheets. I should like to see them disabused, but I should like this to be done in a way that would transfer their faith from the letter to the spirit, and not destroy their faith altogether.

I believe that all spiritual truth is of inspiration, and that it is apprehended (as I said before) by that in man which is of the nature of inspiration. Unless there were "a true light lightening every man that cometh into the

world," God would never speak or have spoken to man, for He would not have been understood. I cannot draw a distinct line between Inspiration in the Bible and Inspiration out of the Bible, but I am sure that all that God speaks to us through others or from without is intended to make us better apprehend what He is speaking to each of us in the secret of our own being.

At the same time I ought to say that I find thoughts and words both in the Old Testament and in the New, which reach my inmost soul with a conviction and a power that I find in no other thoughts or words.

I think that the great fault of our common preaching consists in the almost entire want of reference to that inward light in man. "Christ in you the hope of glory" is the gospel which Paul preached to the Colossians (ch. i. 27), and the outward Christ could not have been our Saviour unless He had been also within.

I have been long of sending this, but I have thought it right to send it that I may mark where I conceive your friend to be quite safe, and where I think he ought to be on his guard. This is all very desultory.—I remain, dear sir, yours truly, T. ERSKINE.

Mr. Erskine's letter having been sent to Dr. Muir, he wrote expressing a strong desire that Mr. Erskine would give to the world his views on the subjects handled in his pamphlet. To this Mr. Erskine replied:—

334. TO PROFESSOR LORIMER.

LINLATHEN, DUNDEE, *5th Aug.* 1858.

DEAR SIR,—I return your friend's letter, wishing much I could do what he suggests in it. I believe that a true explanation of what Christianity means is the only evidence on which it can be received. No miracles of whatever kind could make a man who felt in his conscience that he was

called to be good, loving, righteous, believe that God was not good, nor loving, nor righteous; his difficulty is to reconcile this character of God with the facts around him —I may add, with facts within him. The idea of judgment comes in and bewilders him. He sees sin and misery around him; he is conscious of sin and misery within himself, and God becomes to his conception a Judge and not a Father. With such a conception it is impossible that he can make any progress in moral or spiritual life. If I suppose that God is simply pronouncing judgment on me through the voice of conscience, and not educating me, I can have no confidence in Him, and without confidence in Him I am powerless for any good. I must have confidence in Him, but it must be, not a confidence in His laxity or indulgence, but, a confidence in His purpose to make me and all men LIKE HIMSELF. This is the confidence that I must have in God if I am not to fear Him, or hate Him, or despise Him. With this confidence I can trust myself on the immeasurable ocean of being; without it I must either live without thought, or a prey to continual fear, or a devil occupied with my own appetites and passions. Wherever I find such a character of God I acknowledge a true religion. It meets my conscience, it meets my reason, it is the crowning fulfilment of that order which is presented to me in the relations of life. According to this light, the laws of the spiritual world are unchangeable; an unloving, unrighteous, impure, selfish being must be miserable. God's mercy never dreams of relaxing this law, but His constant and eternal and finally triumphant action is to draw man out of that evil condition into His own goodness. If I can gather this character of God out of the Bible, I feel that I owe an immense debt to it, or rather to Him who by His providence has thus supplied the need of my soul. Of one revelation I am perfectly sure, and that is the revelation of God's light in my conscience. And yet, as I have just said,

I find that I am often puzzled by it, and that I draw wrong inferences from it. I feel myself delivered from my difficulties and helped to give the true interpretation to the indications of the light within me by this view of the character and purpose of God which the Bible, and especially the New Testament, opens up to me. And so I acknowledge it as a revelation also. The only revelation from without which I can acknowledge is some light which will give its full and satisfactory interpretation to that revelation within, which I already have. I believe also that a man may be almost insensible to the light within him, and may yet find that light stirring itself under the action of a true light from without which awakens him to a consciousness of its being there.

This character of God as a teaching Father who eternally desires and seeks the holiness of His reasonable creatures seems to me the great revelation of the Bible, and the true meaning of Christianity. I am prepared to hear any criticisms on the book; they do not trouble me in the least. I have found a medicine which heals me; I have found an omnipotent Friend, whom I may, by following selfish desires, shut out from my spiritual sight, but from whom I can never separate myself—a friend who is the eternal enemy, and will be the eternal conqueror, of all evil, and who will neither spare Himself nor us any suffering which may be necessary to this result. This is the pearl of great price which when a man has found he needs not that any other should tell him its value, he knows it and feels it; he does not need any evidence that this revelation of the character of God is a true revelation, he knows it must be true, or his own existence, his own consciousness, is a lie.

If any textual emendations or any improved translation could bring this truth into clearer light, I should welcome them with my whole heart. Even without this unspeakable

advantage I welcome them; but I have often been disappointed by finding that men who were zealous for the critical processes were comparatively cold to this, without which these processes are mere matters of philology. Now if I were to attempt a crusade it would be for this truth, and not for the philology, because I should like to concentrate the thoughts and hearts of men upon it.

Now, my dear sir, I have to repeat of this what I said of another of my letters, that it is all very desultory, but I think there is a truth in it which will commend itself to some consciences.—Yours truly, T. ERSKINE.

335. TO BISHOP EWING.[1]

41 CHARLOTTE SQUARE, *February* 8, 1861.

No man can long more for an agreement between our Christianity and our conscience and spiritual reason than I do, but I do not think this is to be effected by such works as the *Essays and Reviews.*

It is not by such criticisms that man can be helped to read and understand the Bible. This is the eighth day of the month, and I have been reading the Psalms and lessons for the day, and I find in all the portions of Scripture, so widely separated from each other in point of time, and in the circumstances of the writers, the breathing of the Holy Spirit, so revealing to man, as no other voice ever did, his true condition before God, and drawing him up out of that horrible pit, with an apprehension of his Heavenly Father's unchangeable purpose of holy love towards him, and help-

[1] This letter was written immediately before a visit paid by the Bishop to Mr. Erskine, of which he writes:—"I have just come from being ten days with Mr. Erskine in Edinburgh. It is always a great gain to be with him. I learn more from his conversations than from all the books I read. His looks and life of love are better than a thousand homilies."—*Memoir of Bishop Ewing*, p. 311.

For other and most valuable letters to Bishop Ewing besides those quoted in this volume, see *Present Day Papers*, Third Series.

ing him to rise into fellowship with the heart, where that purpose ever lives, as an everlasting ground of hope and consolation, that after reading these words I have felt that when some gentlemen of cultivated faculties combined their efforts to enlighten their countrymen in the nature and structure of that book (so that it might be studied with intelligence and profit), a very different result was to have been expected from that which they have actually accomplished.

Every one who has read the Bible with real earnestness, must have felt that its chief object was to help man to know God, and to know themselves in His light, and so be led to receive His Spirit, and to become temples of the Holy Ghost. Surely then, if we find this chief object ignored and unnoticed in dissertations written to elucidate the character of the book, we must at least admit that by this omission a very grave mistake has been committed. I am reading them over, so that I may not form my own judgment on quotations picked out by those who have assailed them in the periodical press.

I have finished the first, and find nothing to condemn in it; but it, I suppose, is the most innocent of the seven, with perhaps the exception of the last, whose author is, I know, a thorough believer in subjective Christianity at least, and is an earnest man. In fact it is more what they have left unsaid than what they have said that I grieve for; although I feel that a miraculous previous history, such as that of the Jews, according to the Old Testament record, is required as the preparation for the appearance of Jesus Christ. It is required also as the explanation of the difference between the religious knowledge of the Jews and that of all other nations. Does not a miraculous dispensation seem the reasonable and necessary concomitant of that wonderful light shining in the midst of gross dark-

ness? God thus taught the people, that they were not to be the slaves of matter, but to be the free children of Him who governs all things. The miracles of the Bible are not marvels, but illustrations of the character of God, and prophecy is the continual witnessing that in God alone is the redemption of man, and that the redemption is to be accomplished by the way of sorrow and suffering and death.—Very truly yours, T. ERSKINE.

336. TO MISS GOURLAY.

127 GEORGE STREET, *14th Aug.* 1869.

MY DEAR MISS GOURLAY,—Miss Wedgwood is very good and diligent. She reads Ewald to me, the history of Israel divested of miracle, and as a nation choosing God, not chosen by God. Such a choice continuing during such a length of time, in the midst of surrounding idolatry, seems to me more incredible than any miracle. But it is a very ingenious and very gravely written book.[1]

V.—SELF-SACRIFICE—THE SACRIFICE OF CHRIST.

337. TO BISHOP EWING.

41 CHARLOTTE SQUARE, *January* 9, 1861.

MY DEAR BISHOP,—Don't you yourself feel that the sacrifice of Christ was truly the sacrifice of self at the very root of the humanity? It is written in the Epistle to the Hebrews that "He put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself."

Sin consists in self-seeking; and sin can therefore be put away by no other means than the sacrifice of self—a

[1] See also "The Bible in relation to Faith," being the fourth chapter in *The Spiritual Order*.

sacrifice, however, which must be reproduced in every soul of man before he is individually delivered from sin.

Christ's sacrifice cannot be unlike anything else in the world—it is the very type of what must be done by the spirit of Christ in every human being.—Yours affectionately, T. ERSKINE.

338. TO BISHOP EWING.

41 CHARLOTTE SQUARE, *January* 15, 1861.

MY DEAR BISHOP,—What is the meaning of the words of our Lord, "Not my will, but thine be done"? and those others, "I came not to do mine own will, but the will of my Father"? Jesus Christ was truly a man, and truly tempted, although He always resisted temptation, and, therefore, had that in Him which could be tempted. He came into humanity, and went through the education of humanity, laying down self at each step. He would not have been a real man, if He had not had that self in Him which would seek its own. And He was our Saviour by continually sacrificing that self, and by presenting Himself continually to His Father in every thought and word and deed—a perfectly loving and obedient Son. His sacrifice was the work of His whole life, and this sacrifice is the basis and the soul of all true worship of God in man. . . .

339. TO THE SAME.

41 CHARLOTTE SQUARE, *February* 1861.

VESCOVO CARISSIMO,—I have, of course, read Mr. Maurice's book on Sacrifice, and I felt there, as in all his writings and speakings on the subject, the presence of that element of which he feels the absence both in Mr. Campbell and in me. It is not, however, absent from my mind, only I feel a great difficulty in forming anything like a

clear idea of it. It is the redemption of humanity by its purgation in its root—the God-man, through His death and resurrection. I have been always accustomed chiefly to contemplate this in its reproduction, in the spirits of men, by the operation of the Holy Spirit, when it becomes part of our own personal conscious history. I have always felt Mr. Maurice's language on this subject less clear than I could wish. I find this both in his book on Sacrifice, and in the remarks which he makes on Campbell's book in the introduction to his Epistle of St. John. I believe that Christ's work on earth could not have been a mere manifestation of the loving purpose of the Father, but must have accomplished something, and that was the purgation of which I have spoken above. . . . —Very truly yours, T. ERSKINE.

VI.—EDUCATION NOT PROBATION.

340. TO THE SAME.

LINLATHEN, *August* 17, 1864.

VESCOVO CARISSIMO,— . . . It is as clear as day that, however true a truth may be, it can never have its full legitimate influence over me and value to me, until I discern the truthfulness of it; but I require to be gradually educated into the discernment of its truthfulness; and authority is an indispensable element in this education. A child must begin in its knowledge of numbers by believing on the authority of its teacher that twice two is four, yet no one even supposes that the child has really learned the truth on this matter until it is in a condition to reject any authority that would try to give it the idea that twice two was five. Even so in religious truth we must begin with authority: the child is to be educated

into the discernment of truth, and we know that in regard to much in this department of thought, nine hundred and ninety-nine out of every thousand remain children to the end of their lives. At the same time, the object of the true teacher will always be to help the child (whether he be young or old) to discern the truthfulness of the truth, and this is to be done by helping it from a lower step to a higher, by letting it perceive the connection between them, just as a child, after it has perceived that twice two is four, may be helped to see that twice four is eight. Thus a child may soon understand that God wishes it to be good, if it has the good fortune to have a father or mother who it feels wishes it to be good, and when it has got the knowledge in this way, it has hold of the truth, not on authority, but really. In the same way it may learn that God's purpose in punishing it is to make it good, and that the meaning of God's goodness in relation to it is that He will use the fittest treatment (whether pain or pleasure) to make it good. It may then go on to learn that real trust in God means a confidence that His purpose in all that He does is to make it good. It is quite evident that the duty of faith in God might be taught as a dogma resting on the authority of Catechism or Scripture for a hundred years without the slightest good, because the old child has never discerned the truthfulness of the truth. Now, as I believe that all the dogmas of Revelation are connected with that primal truth, their truthfulness must be discerned in the light of that truth before they can do the work they are intended for. The true teaching of Christianity is helping men to see that the work of Christ is simply the declaration of and carrying out of this primal truth, that God's purpose is to make men good. For my own part, I feel that I believe the Bible because of the things that I find in it,

rather than that I believe them because they are in the Bible.

I believe that if it were generally adopted as a fundamental truth that man was created not to be tried but to be educated, it would help to clear the way both of teachers and of learners very much. The idea that we are in a state of trial or probation necessarily forces us to look on God as a Judge, and forces us also to be more occupied with the forgiveness of sins than with a deliverance from sinfulness. It is this idea which has given its character of substitution to the life and death of Christ, representing it as the ground on which God is justified in forgiving men, rather than as the actings of the root of the human tree, by which the sap is prepared for and propelled into the branches. It seems to me also that it is this idea which has made eternal punishment to be received as a principle in God's government. If it were believed that God had created us for education, and that not one in a thousand had really received any education, it would generally be accepted without hesitation that the education must necessarily proceed in the next world. . . .

I hope the Great Physician's treatment may be profitable both for your soul and body.—Yours very truly,

T. ERSKINE.

341. TO BISHOP EWING.

LINLATHEN, *August* 24, 1865.

MY DEAR BISHOP,—Your question about God doing evil that good may come—doing an evil moreover which we distinctly see, to produce an assumed good which we do not see—is one which has probably at times darkened most minds. The answer which my mind makes to itself is, that the spiritual education of individuals, and not

the outward ordering of society, is God's great object. Righteous causes in the world are often overborne by unrighteous power, and yet the man who suffers for the defeated righteous cause completely justifies God in his own heart, giving Him credit for a purpose of training which he finds realised in his own experience. The Mahometan ship arriving after the king's prayer that the ship of the true faith should come first belongs to the same class of things. Is not the way of the Lord unequal? Whenever a man lives in this world as if it *were all*, the way of the Lord must appear unequal. What a monstrous thing in appearance it seems that I should come into existence with a predisposition to malice and envy, and pride and sensuality; and then that I should, in the ordering of my lot, have every opportunity afforded me of gratifying these evil inclinations. Nothing but that life is an education, can give a meaning of righteousness to this fact.

It seems to me that God's eternal, unchangeable, and unalterable purpose of making all men righteous, combined with His perfect wisdom and knowledge, is the only explanation of the wholesale slaughter of Canaanites and Perizzites, etc. If a surgeon knows to a certainty that he can cure a man of cancer or frightful neuralgia by putting a knife through the part, he would be wrong not to do it. It is a great help to apprehend the immense difference between a man becoming good by choice and being made good whether he will or not, and the necessarily great superiority of the one goodness over the other, and hence to infer the righteousness of all means used to produce the former. God does me no injustice whatever misery He may subject me to, if He is by it leading me to this. The smallest unnecessary suffering I protest against; but any suffering which is needed to press me into eternal life, eternal

righteousness, I accept with my whole reason and choice, however much I may shrink from it whilst it is upon me. One is apt to forget that the small annoyances of life constitute parts of this process. If I can remove them I consider myself entitled to do so, but I am wrong if I do this with no other thought than to get rid of a burthen. There is a supernatural element in all my circumstances which is nothing less or lower than the will of God, and I ought to handle it reverently.

I should much like to have a few days with you, but I fear I ought not to venture so far from home. I shall be seventy-seven in October—very near the conclusion certainly! It is a wonderful thought the passing through the veil.—Yours most truly, T. ERSKINE.

342. TO BISHOP EWING.

LINLATHEN, *September* 16, 1865.

MY DEAR BISHOP,— . . . I am not searching into the origin of evil. I merely say that, as a spiritual being is only good by choosing to be good, it needs to be educated into this choice of goodness, and cannot be made good in the truest and highest sense. Those who suppose that this goodness could be created or made, can never understand the spectacle of this world. They think that God might have saved an enormous amount of sin and misery by creating men permanently good at once. I do not feel that I am beating my head against an insoluble difficulty when I maintain that the goodness which God desires to see in men is a goodness which in the nature of things can only result from a process of educational exercise. I believe that every human being is intended to occupy a particular place in the great organised body of the humanity of which Christ is the Head, and that a

suitable course of education will be applied to each one, through all the stages of his existence, until he is made fit to fill this place.

And when I further see that the great object of God in this education is to make man sensible that he requires God in everything, that he can do nothing rightly without God, then I can understand, that there may be a real progress in this education, even by all the down-breakings which men make in life. I see that faith and recipiency are one thing. The righteousness of faith is God received into man's will, as his only possible portion and refuge—"Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done." But a *belief* in the inextinguishable loving purpose of God is necessary as the basis of this *faith*.

I am thankful to be able in my own mind, in my own reason, to justify the ways of God to man. I am thankful to be able to give God glory in all His dealings with myself and my race. . . .

I would say to ——, "I don't deny that there is a trial and probation throughout man's whole life—but the trial is subservient to the education: he is tried that he may be educated, he is not educated that he may be tried." And to —— I would say, "Men are always under this purpose of education, and this purpose implies forgiveness of past sins; and thus they are under the forgiveness of God, whether they know it or not." He interprets this into an affirmation, on your part, that men were saved whether they knew it or not; but the above was and is your meaning, no doubt.

I would say that faith means a perfect assurance that what ought to be, will be,—that God will certainly do that which is right, and that right is the best thing that can be done for me, and for every one else. A man who believes that right could ever possibly do him harm has no true faith.

The man who believes that right must always do him good, has got hold of the secret of truth and peace—for he will also believe that God must always do right. This is the text of the prophecy of Habakkuk—one of the most precious books of the Bible—in my estimation. It is the eternal blessed reality of that technical conventionality in the English Constitution, that the king can do no wrong. The real King, the eternal King, can do no wrong. He must do right, and right is the universal good—for you, for me, and all—for bad and good.

I should like now and then to have a word with you. The living voice is better than the touch of a pen; but these things are true, whether spoken or unspoken. They are rays of that eternal light, of which it is said, "Thy sun shall no more go down, for the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory.—Ever truly yours, T. ERSKINE.

343. TO THE REV. G. D. BOYLE.[1]

3 CHARLOTTE SQUARE, EDINBURGH, 24*th Nov.* [1863.]

DEAR SIR,—I have been from home, and moving about, so that your letter has been delayed in coming to me—your very interesting letter, for nothing is to me more interesting than an acknowledgment from any human being of our spiritual relationship, and the community of our spiritual needs and desires, and hopes and confidences. I should rejoice to be of the smallest help to you, but I should expect less to help you by telling you anything which you yourself do not already know, than by sympathising with you either in your ignorances and anxieties

[1] "I never saw Mr. Erskine, but he was so well known to many friends of mine that, on the suggestion of my friend the Rev. F. D. Maurice, I wrote to him, and had these letters in reply."—(Extract from letter of the Rev. G. D. Boyle, Summerhill, Kidderminster.)

or in your rejoicings in the light of God's love. I didn't know exactly what book of mine you point at in your letter; I wrote three books after I in some measure apprehended the meaning of the forgiveness of sins. They are all full of mistakes and ignorance, so that I could not name any of them as containing even what I myself see of divine truth; and yet I feel that the root of the matter is in them, though often obscurely, and that it is this which has made them of any service.

It seems almost a dispute about words to say that it is a mistake to call man's condition a state of probation, and that its true name is a state of education, yet I have myself found that this distinction is no light matter. When you look up to God out of a state of probation or trial, you cannot but look upon Him as a Judge, and you cannot but fear an impartial judgment from Him. If you look to Him as from a state of education, you regard Him as a Father who has brought you into being with the one purpose of training you into a participation of His own righteousness and His own blessedness. If you see and feel that this object, namely, the participation in His righteousness and blessedness is the object in existence the most desirable for you, then you will feel that God's purpose for you is exactly your own purpose for yourself, that you could not therefore be in better hands. This is the right condition of man's spirit in relation to God, the righteousness of faith, of perfect trust, perfect confidence. I believe that the mission of the Son was chiefly to show us this purpose of God towards us, both the love of His heart and what that love desired for us. The idea of propitiation is necessarily modified according as you take the one or the other of these views. But I shall stop until I know that this is really interesting to you.—Yours very truly,

T. ERSKINE.

VII.—THE TRUE CHARACTER OF GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS.

344. TO THE REV. G. D. BOYLE.

EDINBURGH, *19th May* 1864.

DEAR SIR,—It may seem strange to you that I do not remember whether I answered your letter to me of last November, but I don't like to run the risk of not answering it, and would rather answer it twice. I conceive that great confusion often arises from misconceptions as to the meaning of righteousness in God. It is generally interpreted to mean the conscientious and scrupulous fairness of a judge who gives sentence according to a law which he is appointed to administer, and which has no other end than to protect innocence and to punish crime. Now the righteousness of God must be very different from this; His righteousness desires to communicate itself, its object is to make men righteous. If you saw a father punishing his child, and you asked him what he intended by it, if he were to answer, I do it because the fellow deserves it; if you then were to ask him what effect he expected to produce on his son's character by it, and he were to reply, I don't think of that, I satisfy myself with knowing that he deserves it,—would you not say at once to him, You seem to me to have renounced both the duties and the privileges of a father; you are neither a righteous father nor a righteous man; God made you a father that you might help Him in His purpose to make your child a good man, and you have ignored this high calling entirely. The true righteousness endeavours to make righteous; it can never cease to do so; when it does cease, it ceases to be righteousness. Now is it not evident that this true righteousness necessarily implies and contains forgiveness in its very nature? It

punishes with the purpose of blessing, not for punishing's sake. The gift of Christ is just the manifestation of this righteous purpose of God. The love which gave the gift contains and implies forgiveness. Now, if this is just a repetition of something which I have already written, you will excuse it, remembering that I am nearer eighty than seventy. I don't write with the expectation of an answer, but if you choose to write, which will be always gratifying to me, the safest address in present circumstances (of flitting) is the New Club, Princes Street.—I remain, dear Sir, yours truly, T. ERSKINE.

345. TO BISHOP EWING.

16 CHARLOTTE SQUARE, *March* 2, 1867.

MY DEAR BISHOP,—What a blessed thing it is to rejoice in God! Our common theology does not even contemplate this; all that it aims at is to look at God without terror, as an appeased Judge. And yet it must require something beyond that to produce love—love, the living, quickening principle of our moral being. We cannot love God on the mere ground that He will not punish us. We must know that He loves us, and that He does so independently of all our ill deserts, and will continue to do so until He has subdued our unlovingness.

I find myself always falling back on the assurance that the inextinguishable purpose of God towards us is to make us partakers of His own righteousness. This is the truest description of love, the self-communicating principle—the longing for sympathy, giving and receiving, in the highest sphere. Thus love and righteousness are seen to be one and the same thing. The righteous father desires, and must for ever desire, the righteousness of his children; thus the righteousness of God, which Calvinism makes the

enemy of man, is really his truest and fastest friend. I have a great love for the eighth verse of the twenty-fifth Psalm. In other places we have declarations of what God does for those that trust in Him and fear Him; but here the object of His care is the sinner. And what a treasure is contained in the last six verses of the fifth chapter of St. Matthew, where the perfection of God is made to consist in loving the evil and the unjust.

T. ERSKINE.

346. TO THE SAME.

NEW CLUB, EDINBURGH, *May* 18, 1864.

VESCOVO CARISSIMO,— . . . That the distinguishing feature of righteousness in God is the desire to communicate righteousness, and not to exact penalties, seems to me a great principle.—Yours affectionately,

T. ERSKINE.

VIII.—SUDDEN CONVERSIONS.

347. TO MRS. BATTEN.

LINLATHEN, 17*th August* 1859.

DEAR MRS. BATTEN,—The information contained in your own letter, and in Mr. Brendon's, and the other, about the conversions taking place in your neighbourhood and elsewhere, is very remarkable and very interesting.

I do not pretend to judge them. I am sure the Lord desires the conversion of all, and that His Spirit is striving with all, whether they yield to the sacred influence or resist it.

A conversion, that is to say a true conversion, implies a knowledge of God, and of the relation in which we stand to Him in His Son. It implies a knowledge of God as a holy, loving Father, who desires for us that we should be partakers of His own holiness and His own blessedness. But a man may be awakened without being converted; he may discern that it is a fearful thing to be opposed to the God who holds him and all things in His hands. He may discern that the words which he has been in the habit of using about God and sin are the representatives of tremendous realities, but until he knows that this God is his own loving Father, he can never turn to Him truly. I would say that God lives by and in His own Will, that Will is the eternal life of God, and when a created spirit receives God's Will into its will, it becomes partaker of the eternal life. This I conceive is salvation; I don't understand any other meaning of salvation. This is what I believe man was made for; his danger, his temptation, is self-will,—making himself his centre. This is sin, that which separates a man from God and his fellow-creatures.

Jesus came to save men from sin, from this sin, which is the root and summing-up of all sin. This then is the salvation of Christ: I don't believe that He came to deliver men from any penalty. I believe that every penalty which God has inflicted on men has been for good, so that deliverance from it would be an evil. I cannot see any distinction between salvation and the conformity of the will to God.

I agree with Mr. Brendon that I should expect more lasting results from a silent conversion than from a more excited one, still it is the actual turning to God which is the important matter.

In this country we are all brought up from childhood with the great words of Christianity sounding in our ears,

but they have no meaning to us until we hear them in the spirit.

This discovery of the truth does not make God our Father. He always was and is so; He is the Father of the prodigal whilst eating the husks with the swine, but until he knows His Father's love he shuts out the eternal life, because he cannot trust his Father. He cannot open his will to let in and embrace his Father's Will, for that seems to threaten him with destruction; but when he discovers that that Will seeks only to deliver him from the disorder and confusion and misery which his blinded self-seeking has produced, then he can and will say, "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts, and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." He now sees that what God desires for him is the very thing which he desires for himself, but which he can only get through a participation in God's Spirit, and through yielding himself to all God's training.

"Open Thou mine eyes, that I may see wondrous things out of Thy law." God is my Father, Christ is my head, and the Spirit proceeding from the Father and the Son is breathing into my conscience.

This is all true, whether I believe it or not. My faith cannot make it, but until I know Him whose voice it is, until I know whence that voice cometh, and whither it would lead me, I am not, and cannot be, born of it; for this is life eternal, to know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent; and the birth of the spirit, the birth from above, is just to receive the eternal life, to receive the will of God, instead of the will of the flesh, or of self-will.

One man may teach another words, but he cannot even give him thought, much less can he give him a realising apprehension of the realities of the unseen world.

I think that there is a great deal of wisdom in Mr. Brendon's observation, that in the case of these sudden conversions there is always the danger of the person trusting in the conversion, instead of trusting in God. In fact there is a continual temptation to escape difficulties by substituting a sham for a reality. I may have eternal life for ten minutes, but I must abide in it by a sustained faith in God and by the continual action of my will, if I would keep the blessing. I must fight the good fight of faith, not merely to get hold of eternal life, but to keep hold of it, and to make progress in it.

Man was created perfect, that is, merely without the wrong bias; and he was placed where he was that he might learn the superiority of God's Will to his own, and practically to acknowledge that superiority. He had the self-will in him which he was to keep in subjection to the will of God. This he could only do by continual trust and continual watchfulness, but he seems to have forgotten that he was placed there to learn to fight, and thought only of enjoying, and thus the first temptation overcame him. And are we to think ourselves secure because we have tasted of the love of God?

I don't believe that a man is or can ever be stereotyped either in good or evil. To suppose that God is good by necessity and not by His own will would be to degrade Him; and it must be the same with the creatures made in His image. Moral good always implies choice, so man can neither be made good nor upheld in good by a mere act of power. And yet neither conversion nor perseverance in good is man's own act. They are the voluntary yieldings of man to the actings of God. We are the branches of the Vine, whether we receive the sap or not; our will cannot make the sap, or be a substitute for it. The voice of conscience is the effort of the sap to enter into the

branch; that effort gives us the power to receive. Man is made to be a continual receiver, and in order to this he must be in a continual state of trustful dependence. We are to be fellow-workers with God, I suppose and believe, for ever.

I believe that the baptism of an infant means simply to declare God's fatherly love and relation to the child, and His purpose to educate it for Himself,—this I believe to be true of every child born into this world. Baptism declares the truth, it does not make it. The child must afterwards learn to yield its will.

I believe also that the forgiveness to be preached through Christ is the same thing which is declared in baptism.

It is not withdrawing any penalty, it is the declaration of God's fatherly love and relationship to every human being, and His unchanged and unchangeable purpose to train him into conformity with the Divine Will, which will be carried forward on the other side of the grave as well as on this.—I am, etc., T. ERSKINE.

IX.—ETERNITY OF LIFE—OF PUNISHMENT—OF EVIL.

348. TO MADAME FOREL.

41 CHARLOTTE SQUARE, EDINBURGH,
24th April 1862.

. . . I BELIEVE as you do, that eternity has nothing to do with duration. I think eternal means essential in opposition to phenomenal. So eternal life is God's own life; it is essential life; and eternal punishment is the misery belonging to the nature of sin, and not coming from outward causes. A man who receives the will of God into his inner being is taking hold of eternal life, for God's life is in His will,

or perhaps His will is His life, and thus a participation in His will is a participation in His life. Que ton royaume (*règne*) vienne, que ta volonté soit faite. This is salvation, —when a man uses his individual will merely as the recipient of God's will. All the planets have their separate individual centres of gravitation, but then only there is order, when these are kept in subordination to the sun as the common centre. Salvation is true order in the moral world. It means a deliverance from disorder, not a deliverance from punishment, for punishment is desirable when it corrects disorder. Give my affectionate regards to Madame Vinet . . . and believe me, very truly yours,

T. ERSKINE.

349. TO BISHOP EWING.

LINLATHEN, *October* 5, 1864.

VESCOVO CARISSIMO,—Our faith in the eternity of punishment is as hurtful a dogma as the Real Presence or Transubstantiation, interfering wofully with all trust in God. I have been lately struck with the direct contradiction of that faith in the 11th chapter of Romans. I am surprised that any one can resist it. . . .—Affectionately yours,

T. ERSKINE.

350. TO THE SAME.

3 CHARLOTTE SQUARE, *February* 1, 1864.

MY DEAR BISHOP,—The question of the eternity of evil has a difficulty in it beyond what appears at first. If we suppose eternal creation, we can scarcely escape from the eternity of evil. I believe that there is a continual contest, and a successful contest, of good and God against evil: but I believe also that whilst the creation of moral agents with free wills continues, the evolution of evil from these free wills will take place. Thus the eternal existence

of evil is a quite distinct idea from the permitted permanency of evil.

What your Charge I suppose meant to suggest was, that God always must contend, and contend successfully, against evil, and never consents to its permanency. The eternity of evil, if true, does not arise from the permanency of evil, but from ever new creation of free-will agents, who in their progress evolve evil.—I remain, yours always,

T. ERSKINE.

351. TO AN UNKNOWN CORRESPONDENT.

FAITH in God, trust in the righteous God, the Almighty Maker and Ruler of all things, contains within it the assurance that good must overcome evil universally. But what is the victory of Good over Evil? Is it the destruction and annihilation of all evil beings? No, that is not the victory of good over evil, but the victory of strength over weakness. The victory of good over evil is the conversion of all evil beings into good beings; it is the making darkness light and crooked things straight.

I am saved from pantheism by the consciousness that I can and do resist God, and also that I can and do yield myself to Him.

X.—FINAL SALVATION OF ALL.

352. TO MR. CRAIG.[1]

DEAR SIR,—Your epistle on the "Final Salvation of All Men from Sin" has been put into my hands by a friend, who knew that the principles contained in it are those with which I have long concurred and sympathised: and

[1] Author of "Final Salvation," etc.

having read it, I cannot help reaching out to you a brotherly hand, and saying, God speed you!

The title of your pamphlet has been, I think, well chosen. It is not a deliverance from punishment, but a deliverance from sin, that you desire or expect. All punishment appointed by God, whether it be the natural result of sin, or any superadded chastisement, is intended by Him "for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness;" so that a deliverance from punishment, instead of being a thing to be desired, would, in fact, be equivalent to the deliverance of a sick man from the necessary and wise prescription of a skilful physician. This is the revealed purpose of punishment,—a purpose agreeing with the character of God, and with the relation in which He stands to men. He is the "righteous Father"—"the Father of the spirits of all flesh," "who willeth not the death of a sinner; but that all should come to repentance." Let us hold fast the purpose of God in all punishment, and remember that as it is the purpose of Him who changeth not, but who is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, it cannot be a purpose confined to any one stage of our being, but must extend over all the stages, and the whole duration of our being. It is surely most unreasonable to suppose that God should change His manner of dealing with us, as soon as we quit this world, and that if we have resisted, up to that moment, His gracious endeavours to teach us righteousness, He should at once abandon the purpose for which He created us and redeemed us, and give us up to the everlasting bondage of sin. Do we not feel that such a supposition is too horrible—that it is most dishonouring to Him who has said, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee," and, "The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed, but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my

peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee"?

This reasoning agrees with the argument presented to us in the 5th chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, where the Apostle, in setting forth the fulness of the redemption by Christ, declares that the benefit through Him is, in extent, parallel to the evil introduced by Adam; that is, that as the evil affects all without exception, so the blessing embraces all without exception. Let any one read the 12th and 18th verses of that chapter, as if in juxtaposition, which they really are by construction, and he will find himself constrained to admit that this and nothing less could have been the meaning of the writer. Indeed, through the whole chapter there is a preponderating advantage thrown into the scale of the redemption, to the effect that not only were the evils of the fall met by the salvation of Christ, but that the gain far surpassed the loss, so that it is really contrary to sound criticism to hold, that in that most marked and most remarkable passage, where the comparative results of the fall and the restoration are expressly considered, any ground is allowed or given for a doubt as to the final salvation of the whole human race. The 11th chapter of that Epistle is pervaded by the same doctrine, being a declaration that God's election does not affect the truth and certainty of the final salvation of men, but relates to the temporary use which He makes of individuals or nations to accomplish the ends of His government. I know well, that most people in this country feel that all such arguments and expositions are met and overturned by the solemn words of our Lord in the 25th chapter of St. Matthew, and by other passages of a like import. I feel, on the contrary, that the passages which I have quoted from the Epistle to the Romans ought really to be considered

as the ruling passages on the question, and that those from St. Matthew, and others of the same class, should be explained by them, and in accordance with them, because in them the fall and the restoration are expressly compared with each other, in their whole results, and the entire superiority claimed for the restoration in amount of benefit, and entire equality in point of extent; all which would seem to me to be utterly nullified by the fact of a single human spirit being abandoned and consigned to a permanent state of sin and misery. I therefore understand that awful scene represented in St. Matthew, as declaring the certainty of the connection between sin and misery, but not as a finality. I do not believe that *αἰώνιος*, the Greek word rendered "eternal" and "everlasting" by our translators, really has that meaning. I believe that it refers to man's essential or spiritual state, and not to time, either finite or infinite. Eternal life is living in the love of God; eternal death is living in self; so that a man may be in eternal life or in eternal death for ten minutes, as he changes from the one state to the other.

There is no lack of arguments for the general view which I have taken of this subject, drawn either from conscience or the Scriptures, or both. There is one which cannot but have great weight with all who fairly consider it. Throughout even the Old Testament, God is more constantly presented to us as a Father than in any other character; and in the New, our Lord speaks of it as the chief purpose of His appearance in this world, to reveal His Father, as the Father of the whole human race. In both, frequent appeals are made to our sense of the love and desires and obligations of an earthly parent towards his children, in order to impress on us the nature of the relation in which God stands to each one of us; and very frequently these appeals are accompanied with the assur-

ance that the love of the human parent is but a faint reflection of the love of the Heavenly Father. What can be more touching than the appeal in the prophet Isaiah? "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will not I forget thee." The parallel passage in the New Testament is this: "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Heavenly Father give!" But we all feel that the first and ever-during duty of a father is to endeavour to make his child righteous. A righteous father must always do this. The moment he ceases to do this, he ceases to be a righteous father. However the son transgresses, we never feel that the father's obligation to try to bring him back can be dissolved. And the righteous father's heart goes along with his obligation; he could not give up his son although the whole world agreed that he had done all that could be done for him, and that it was useless to try any more. And shall we not reason confidently that the righteous Heavenly Father will do exceeding abundantly above all that the righteous earthly father can either desire or effect? But does this desire for the righteousness of his child, in the heart of the earthly father, terminate with the child's life? Although he is only the father of his body, does he not yearn after the soul of his son, who has been, perhaps, cut off suddenly in the midst of sin and thoughtlessness? He does indeed yearn after his soul, and carries it on his heart a heavy burden, mourning all his life long, and wavering between hope and fear as to what his everlasting lot may be. The righteous earthly father, being only the father of the child's body, feels thus and acts thus; and can we suppose that the Father of the spirits of all flesh will throw off His care for the souls of His children when they leave this world, because they have,

during their stay here, resisted His efforts to make them righteous? The supposition seems monstrous and incredible, and in truth could not be acquiesced in by any human being, were it not for certain false ideas concerning the justice or righteousness of God.

I believe that love and righteousness and justice in God mean exactly the same thing, namely, a desire to bring His whole moral creation into a participation of His own character and His own blessedness. He has made us capable of this, and He will not cease from using the best means for accomplishing it in us all. When I think of God making a creature of such capacities, it seems to me almost blasphemous to suppose that He will throw it from Him into everlasting darkness, because it has resisted His gracious purposes towards it for the natural period of human life. No; He who waited so long for the formation of a piece of old red sandstone will surely wait with much long-suffering for the perfecting of a human spirit.

I have found myself helped in taking hold of this hope by understanding that God really made man that He might educate Him, not that He might try him. If we suppose man to be merely on his trial here, we more readily adopt the idea of a final judgment coming after the day of trial is over. But if we suppose man to be created, not to be tried, but to be educated, we cannot believe that the education is to terminate with this life, considering that there is so large a proportion of the human race who die in infancy, and that of those who survive that period there are so many who can scarcely be said to receive any education at all, and that so few—not one in a million—appear to benefit by their education. That, as there are great judgment days in this world, so there will be great judgment days in the other world, I have no doubt; but I believe that they are all subservient

to the grand purpose of spiritual education. We are judged in order to be thereby educated; we are not educated that we may be judged. I believe that each individual human being has been created to fill a particular place in the great body of Jesus Christ, and that a special education is needed to fit each one for his place. Whilst we are ignorant of the destined place of each, it must of course be impossible for us to understand the wonderful variety of treatment, through which the great Teacher is conducting all by a right way to the right end. But He knows and does what is best and wisest; and may there not be a necessity in some cases for treatment which can only be had on the other side of the grave? And shall we in our short-sightedness consider Him debarred from any such treatment?

I cannot believe that any human being can be beyond the reach of God's grace and the sanctifying power of His Spirit. And if all are within His reach, is it possible to suppose that He will allow any to remain unsanctified? Is not the love revealed in Jesus Christ a love unlimited, unbounded, which will not leave undone anything which love could desire? It was surely nothing else than the complete and universal triumph of that love which Paul was contemplating when he cried out, "Oh the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!" (Rom. xi. 33.)

Let me conclude now by saying that I am persuaded that this doctrine which you advocate is the only sufficient ground for an entire confidence in God, which shall, at the same time, be a righteous confidence. According to it, God created man that he might be a partaker in His own holiness, as the only right and blessed state possible for him. If I truly apprehend this—if I truly apprehend that righteousness and blessedness are one and the same

thing, and just the very thing I most need—I shall rejoice to know that God desires my righteousness; and if I further know that He will never cease to desire it and to insist upon it, and that all His dealings with me are for this one end, then I can have an entire confidence in Him, as desiring for me the very thing I desire for myself. I shall feel that I am perfectly safe in His hand, that I could not be so safe in any other hand; for that, as He desires the best thing for me, so He alone knows and can use the best means of accomplishing it in me. Thus I can actually adopt the sentiment of the Psalmist, and say, "Thou art my strong habitation, whereunto I may continually resort. Thou hast given commandment to save me, for Thou art my rock and fortress." And I can adopt these words without any feeling of self-trust, because my confidence has no back look to myself, but rests simply on God. The greatest sinner upon earth might at once adopt those words, if he only saw that righteousness was his true and only possible blessedness, and that God would never cease desiring this righteousness for him. I am fully persuaded that the real meaning of believing in Jesus Christ is believing in this eternal purpose of God, the purpose of making us living members of the body of His Son. And as this blessed faith helps me to love God and trust Him for myself, so it helps me to love my fellow-creatures, because it assures me that, however debased and unloveable they may be at present, yet the time is coming when they shall all be living members of Christ's body, partakers in the holiness and beauty and blessedness of their Lord.—I remain, dear sir, Yours truly,

T. ERSKINE.

353. TO BISHOP EWING.

KEIR, *June* 18, 1864.

VESCOVO CARISSIMO,—You know that I believe that the Bible was given to us, not to be cited as a peremptory authority in anything, but to help us to understand the character of God, and the relation in which we stand to Him; so that I should regard it as a misuse of it were I to allow any particular passages in it to outweigh the general instruction which it contains on these points, and yet I can say that those passages which give the most direct utterance on the subject of the final destiny of man seem to me to be most unequivocal declarations of universal deliverance. . . .

But now to leave the general instruction which the Bible gives as to the character of God, and to go to particular passages referring to the final destination of man, let me ask you to re-read the 5th and 11th chapters of the Epistle to the Romans. It seems to me impossible to read those two chapters without the conviction that St. Paul, at least, was fully persuaded that all men should finally be saved. In the 5th he contrasts the loss of Adam with the gain of Christ, and whilst he puts them exactly on a par in point of extent, he claims a superabundance of blessedness for the latter over the condemnation of the former. Nothing can be clearer than this. But proceed now to the 11th chapter. The apostle begins by saying that it would not be fair to say that God had cast away His people, because it was evident and undenied that some were not cast away; but still he acknowledged that though there was an election that had obtained what they sought for, yet the nation, as a nation, had failed to obtain it; nay more, that they were blinded, and under a judicial sentence of spiritual slumber and blindness, and deafness,

as it is written in the 7th verse, "Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for, but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded." So here we have the election satisfactorily disposed of; and we are invited to follow the apostle in what he sees of the future history of the rest who were blinded. This future history he takes up at the 11th verse. "I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid! impossible, but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles to provoke them to jealousy." Now read the 12th verse, and the 15th and 16th verses; then go on to the 25th and 26th verses; and so to the end of the chapter; and then say whether in your conscience you can believe that St. Paul did not intend to teach the final salvation of all men; for it must be of all men if it is of all the Israelites; and to suppose that such a word as this could really have an honest fulfilment, by the conversion and salvation of some distant future generation of Jews, whilst all the intermediate generations were left to perish, appears to me gross trifling with the character of God. Strange as it appears, I have found very few people who have read the 11th chapter with real attention. With —— I feel the question to be more and more essential every day.—Yours affectionately, T. ERSKINE.

354. TO THE REV. JOHN YOUNG.

1866.

MY DEAR SIR,—My hope for the final salvation of all men rests, in the first place, on the ground in which I know you believe as I do, namely, *the desire of God that all men should be righteous;* in the second place, on the assurance that God sees the end from the beginning, and will never bring into existence any spirits which He foresees will

finally resist His desire. But further, I may perhaps appear to you to think too lightly of sin; but I cannot help thinking that there may be a teaching through sin, an instruction in righteousness through sin, which perhaps could not be given in any other way. The conviction of the rightness and blessedness of a perfect trust in God may be more efficiently taught through the conviction of the sin and misery of self-trust and self-seeking than through simple spiritual apprehension. May not Peter have learned from his sin in denying his Lord a lesson of self-distrust and trust in God which the words of Jesus could not have given him? God foresaw the whole results which would follow the creation of creatures endowed with free-will, and with these all before Him, *He took the step.* He saw the enormous amount of sin and misery that would be produced, yet He proceeded in the work. I trust in His trust, in His love, and in His wisdom.

I have read a great deal of your book,[1] and like it *very much.* I like what you say of spiritual laws executing themselves, yet if you were within reach I should agree with a difference, with a modification. I believe that God is not merely an Almighty Being, but I believe that there is no righteousness but in Him, and no being but in Him and of Him. I see quite well that a creature endowed with free-will must always be, in a certain sense, on trial. But trial is not the end or object of its existence; trial is subservient to *education.* It cannot be educated without trial, but it is tried that it may thereby be educated. When I understand that God's purpose is to educate me, I feel that the existence of this purpose supposes His sense of my imperfection, perhaps of my sinfulness, and I also feel that the continued existence of this purpose in the heart of God, notwithstanding my slowness to learn, is a revelation of

[1] *The Life and Light of Men.*

forgiveness to me, almost beyond any other form of it.

When I think of having actually resisted the righteous will of God to gratify my own selfish will, it appears so monstrous that though God declares that He forgives me, I cannot forgive myself, I cannot look at it without horror; but if I come to feel that through the deep contrition arising from this transgression and the assurance of a love which proceeds in its endeavours to train me in righteousness, undamped by all this iniquity, my heart has been really brought to trust in God more and to die to self more than it ever was, then I become reconciled to myself; I can think of my sin, not with less but more hatred of it, yet with less horror of myself. I can look forward to eternity without the idea of the hideous memory making existence painful. I have gained by sin. I have gained righteousness through means of it. If this is possible I don't think God would prevent sin even if He could.

I send this to you very ill written, scarcely legible, but you may find it worth spelling out. Farewell.—Very truly yours, T. E.

355. TO THE REV. JOHN YOUNG.

16 CHARLOTTE SQUARE, 18*th Feb.* 1867.

DEAR SIR,—Since my last communication with you, I have sustained a heavy loss by the death of a sister who has for thirty years been the patient, and wise, and affectionate companion of my life and the organiser of my arrangements, making my path smooth, and making my house pleasant to myself and my friends.

I am also suffering from cataract in both eyes, so that I am obliged to depend very much on the eyes of others for my reading. But I have been making myself acquainted

with your book, and may say that I have scarcely ever met with thoughts on the subject of Christianity with which I so entirely sympathise. I wish I lived nearer you, that I might have the benefit of conversing with you.

There is one thing which I have long felt to be a great defect in our popular theologies, the want of distinguishing between faith, as meaning filial trust in God—the faith which Jesus Christ Himself had and lived by—and faith as meaning belief in what Jesus Christ was, and did, and suffered. The value of the first is that it constitutes spiritual life, whilst the value of the second consists in its furnishing and explaining and illustrating the ground on which the first rests.

A man who, though entirely unacquainted with the Jewish or Christian Scriptures, had yet attained to filial trust in God, to the confident assurance that God was his loving Father, and that His purpose in creating him was to train him into a participation of His own righteousness and blessedness—such a man would possess true faith, the faith which Jesus Himself had, and such a man would truly "have the Son" in the spiritual meaning of the text, "He that hath the Son hath life." "Christ in you the hope of glory" is, I believe, the universal condition of humanity, having the same meaning as the word "God created man in His own image." Man has this image, this indwelling spirit in him, which is really the spirit of faith, and which testifies within him that he is not his own; that as he is neither his own creator nor sustainer, so he cannot be his own end, or object, or portion; that he must be a dependent receiver, and that the giver from whom he receives must be love—a loving Father—as otherwise His gifts could never satisfy the heart, and His commandments could never be obeyed. Faith is the law of spiritual gravitation, the spiritual nexus of the universe, the open mouth whereby

the spiritual creation receives out of God. Jesus is the first truster, and all our belief in Him is to help us to enter into His trust, the trust which He has in the Father. I agree with you in your strong protest against the idea of satisfaction to divine justice. I believe, moreover, that man could never afford to want any punishment that God could inflict upon him, and that it is a universal and unchangeable law of the universe that God afflicteth not willingly, but for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness. The man who really believes this is put right—he is ready for anything that comes. If you know the *Gorgias* of Plato, you will understand me when I say that I learned the meaning of justification by faith from that dialogue, before I saw it in St. Paul. I am at present engaged in writing a few last words, which I find great difficulty in doing to my own satisfaction. When it is done I shall beg your acceptance of a copy. It will be a very heterogeneous miscellany, I believe. . . .

356. TO THE REV. JOHN YOUNG.

Feb. 1870, *answered 5th Feb.*

DEAR SIR,—I am not able to write a letter such as ought to be written in answer to yours. I can only say that I do not believe that thinking people will be helped to take hold of the doctrine of Universal Salvation by mere texts. I believe that the assurance that the purpose of God in creating man was the loving, righteous, fatherly purpose of educating him into His own fellowship, *i.e.* a participation in His own righteousness, is the true basis of such a belief. And as the whole Bible seems to me intended to give that assurance, I feel as if I were weakening the great general effect by picking out particular texts. "Good and upright is the Lord, therefore will He teach

sinners in the way," was, I think, the first text that led me to the desired conclusion, and after that the 107th Psalm; and in the New Testament, the end of the 5th chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, and also the end of the 11th chapter. Some of the chapters of Jeremiah, from the 29th to the 33d, contain the same meaning very strongly,—also the 26th chapter of Leviticus. The purpose of all punishment being education is surely the true argument,—that purpose, one may say, being necessary to the very existence of love and of righteousness.

XL.—DOCTRINE OF THE FATHER AND THE SON.

357. TO MRS. GURNEY.

41 CHARLOTTE SQUARE, *Good Friday* 1862.

DEAR MRS. GURNEY, . . . —It is indeed wonderful! If there is no goodness but what is in God, and flows out from God, then there must be in Him two kinds of goodness,—first, the goodness of giving and blessing and ruling; and second, the goodness of receiving and trusting and obeying—the Father and the Son—active and passive goodness, united in one Spirit. Jesus says, "I do nothing of myself. Whatsoever the Father saith unto me, that I do. My Father is greater than I, and yet I and my Father are one." There are thus, as it were, two hemispheres in God, upper and under, distinct personalities. The unity of God is not singleness—it is completeness; and would not a God of love, living from eternity without an object, without a recipient of His love, be incomplete? Is not the thought of such a thing most oppressive and overwhelming to the mind? And the moral creation is

appended to the lower hemisphere, united to the Son, as He prays "that they all may be one, as Thou, Father, art in me—I in them and Thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one," etc. This I find helpful towards the knowledge of God. Contemplating this idea of God, I see and feel that love is His nature, giving and receiving sympathy in communion; no doctrine can ever have been taught by God except to help us nearer Himself, not that we should simply submit our reason to it.—Dear friend, yours affectionately, T. ERSKINE.

358. TO MRS. GURNEY.

41 CHARLOTTE SQUARE, 14*th May* 1862.

DEAR MRS. GURNEY, . . . —I am not sure, from your notice of it, whether you really appreciated what I said about the doctrine of the Father and the Son. I think that in general, even where it is considered as capable of some explanation, the explanation offered is simply its relation to man's redemption, and yet I am satisfied that its true explanation must be helpful in knowing God Himself. Now this help seems to me largely given in the doctrine of the Father and the Son. When we contemplate God before creation—if we can realise such a state in our imaginations —we are sometimes overwhelmed and lost in the sense of a dreary depressing solitude. From everlasting God had been, and God is love. His life consists in love, yet whom had He to love? The idea of love in action excludes the idea of singleness; oneness then is not singleness—oneness is completeness. Then in this completeness there cannot be absolute equality; order always supposes inequality,—"My Father is greater than I." There is the order of giving and receiving, governing and obeying, blessing and trusting. This lower hemisphere is the Son, continually receiving and

returning the Father's love, giving a sympathising response to every thought and feeling in the Father's mind. It is a manifestation of love, and the moral creation is appended to the lower hemisphere that it may partake in the spirit of the Son—"I in them, and Thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one." Faith implies recipiency; the Son's faith receives out of the Father, and man is created in the Son that he may receive of the divine nature and the eternal life. Thus the creation of man necessarily supposes the purpose of Incarnation, the recipiency of the divine nature by flesh, the difference between the Head and the members being this, that the Head is God assuming flesh—men are flesh receiving God.

We read the sermons on your brother-in-law with exceeding interest. He must have been a noble-hearted man and a true. I regret in reading them that I had not endeavoured to become intimate with him, that I might have imbibed some of his spirit. I feel that your husband must have loved him and honoured him, and must have felt his human existence much impoverished by his removal. I myself had a most noble-hearted brother, whom I loved and honoured and trusted entirely, and even now the thought of him helps me to realise my relation to the great Elder Brother, the loving Head of men, who is in each one of us as the head of the natural body is present by the nervous system in every member of the body. He is closer to us than aught else, and is continually seeking to train us into a perfect sympathy with Himself, sympathy with the Father and the Son in every thought and feeling. This is the eternal life; it is a participation in God's own will, and God's will is His life. Mrs. Paterson has been unusually ill lately, and we do not feel that she is yet round the corner.

I beg my very kind regards to your husband and also

to Mrs. Cowper, besides great love to your mother from us all.—Ever affectionately yours, T. ERSKINE.

359. TO MRS. BATTEN AND MRS. RUSSELL GURNEY.

13 CHARLOTTE SQUARE, 23*d Feb.* 1863.

BELOVED FRIENDS, MOTHER AND DAUGHTER,—Any word from you is always most welcome and refreshing, bringing intimations of the eternal sympathy which is also the eternal harmony. I am thankful to find that you have found, in one important matter, that oneness—I mean, that you have found that in very deed the consent of your will to the will of God, in opposition to all self-seeking, is the true order and the true blessedness. Milton speaks of concent as arising out of consent, the *c* marking the musical harmony, the *s* the harmony of feeling. The Father and the Son dwelling in the sympathy of one Spirit are the Fountain of all love, and all goodness, and all blessedness. Wherever we see good, we see the presence of God, for there is no other good. It may be unacknowledged by the creatures in whom it appears; but it is always acknowledged at the Fountainhead by Him who is the beginning of the creation of God, and in whom all things consist. The Eternal Receiver lovingly and thankfully acknowledges the Eternal Giver as His Father and our Father, as His God and our God; and His continual work is to produce this loving and thankful receiving in the whole creation, and when this is accomplished then will come forth the full burst of song, which the ear of the Psalmist heard, though far off, and which our ears will one day hear as the actual voice of the Universe.[1]

My sister is better, and in the drawing-room; but she

[1] See also "The Divine Son," being the second chapter in *The Spiritual Order*, pp. 28-46 (2d edit.)

does not expect to have her accustomed capabilities until she can drive out, which she hopes soon to do, but which cannot be tried without a certain risk. I hope if we are spared till summer that we shall have the great pleasure of seeing you both at Linlathen. These annual meetings must soon come to an end in the course of nature, but the eternal meeting never ends. My sister Davie is very well for her—enjoying her friends, young and old as always. We all three unite in truest love to you both. Farewell.—With my and our best regards to Mr. Gurney, ever affectionately yours, T. ERSKINE.

XII.—GENERAL LAWS.

360. TO THE REV. DONALD CAMPBELL.

3 CHARLOTTE SQUARE, 11*th March* [1864].

MY DEAR DONALD,[1]—You and your difficulties have been ever and anon returning to me since we parted, and I feel called on to write a few words to you, which you may consider at your leisure.

Do you not think that some weight ought to be given to our own consciousness of being in a right or a wrong state, when we are judging of the character of ideas which produce those states—ideas, I mean, regarding God and His relation to us? If I find that certain ideas inflict desolation and paralysis on my spirit, whilst others give me, what I am sure is a righteous hope and a righteous strength, am I not justified in believing that the latter are nearest the truth?

But besides, I am persuaded that in spiritual things logic really goes for nothing, except the gratification of the

[1] Eldest son of the Rev. J. M'Leod Campbell, now a clergyman of the Church of England, editor of his father's *Memoirs*.

consciousness of intellectual power; intuition is everything, that is, the faculty of seeing light and recognising it to be light. We might reasonably expect this; if we are made to be receivers out of God, we might expect that we should be furnished with something of a spiritual taste, fitted to judge of the matter received.

The idea that God is a loving, righteous Father, who has created me to be His child, capable of knowing Him and learning to sympathise with Him in love and goodness, and so to be partaker of His blessedness, and who is educating me for this inwardly and outwardly at every moment, is an idea which commends itself to me as light; and I find also that practically it is fruitful and good. There is no proof of this, except in our own human consciousness; but, also, there is no real proof against it, and I am compelled to regard it as eternal truth.

The regularity and unvaryingness of general laws does not prove that each particular event in the whole universe is not the result of a direct and particular volition of God. He may act directly in this way. Any theory which places God at a distance from me, which hides Him from me, behind combinations of physical laws, is, I find, injurious to my spiritual health; and therefore I am sure that whatever truth there may be in it, I, at least, am not conceiving it rightly; for I am more sure that God's purpose towards me is to teach me to be good in sympathy with Himself, than I can be of anything else in the world. I was reading the other day, in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, a very clever article on a work of Herbert Spencer's, in which speculation on these subjects is carried to the highest point, and the prospect held out of discovering the identity of the laws of spiritual and physical life. I felt great interest in it, but yet I had this feeling accompanying me throughout, that whatever truth there might be in the theory, any

interposition of matter or mind, physical law or spiritual law, between me and God which was implied in that theory must be false. I am sure that God can manifest Himself to me directly through any combinations of organisms, and that nothing but some evil in myself can hide God from me.

If my prayer is only a cry uttered in the hope of some good coming to me from some quarter in consequence of it, I have not yet learned to interpret my own conscience, and consequently I have not yet learned to know Him who speaks to me in it; but when I have actually discovered in that voice a purpose and a purposer, I have arrived at a person who is also a truth, which does not indeed justify me, nor incline me to contend against or reject these speculations, but which claims to itself to have an eternal and dominant reality, with which all other true things must be consistent, and which must be the key to them, if we had the skill to use it, whilst they can never be the key to it. They are but logic: this is spiritual apprehension. They belong to a lower faculty, though their treatment requires the highest form of that faculty.

My dear Donald, I hope you will be able to make sense out of this rather confused letter, and at any rate that you will find love in it, love for your own sake and for your earthly father's sake, and for your heavenly Father's.—Yours very truly, T. ERSKINE.

CHAPTER IX.

Letters of Sympathy and Consolation.

On being informed by Mr. F. Russell of Mr. Erskine's visit to him at the time of his wife's death, Mr. A. J. Scott wrote, "It was with no small pleasure I thought of Erskine being with you at such a time, the man who, of all I ever knew, renders humanity and Christianity most completely into the form of sympathy."[1] Vinet was in the habit of referring to a slight but not insignificant expression of the humanity of this sympathy. He and Mr. Erskine were spending an evening in the house of a common friend. Some moths flickered around the lights, till one touched them and was half burned. Mr. Erskine hastened to abridge its sufferings by seizing it and plunging it into the flame. "Ceci était tout ordinaire, mais c'était l'expression de compassion, de souffrance intime, presque de sympathie, la délicatesse avec laquelle il avait saisi la pauvre bête, qui avait profondément touché Vinet."[2] "Mr. Erskine," Dr. Campbell tells us, "used to fix a child's eye by a look of kindness when we walked among the happy little groups in the Tuileries, and when he elicited a responsive smile he would say, 'That child's spirit and mine have communion.'"[3] His simple look of sympathy in one instance exercised quite

[1] Extract from letter dated Manchester, July 19, 1865.
[2] Preface to "La Pleine Gratuité du Pardon," p. 21.
[3] *Memorials*, vol. ii. p. 245.

a singular influence. The story was told him of one living at the time in the same hotel with him in Switzerland, upon whom had just been flung such a burden of sorrow as inflicted intense mental agony. Just as Mr. Erskine had taken in the whole tale of grief, the sufferer entered the room. They did not know each other, were not introduced, but such was the effect of the look of sympathy that Mr. Erskine bent upon him that the sufferer threw himself into his arms and laid his head upon his shoulder, weeping. Mr. Erskine was not in Edinburgh when the carriage of his friend Mr. Constable, without any fault on the part of the driver, passed over the body of a child and caused its death. He heard of the sad accident at Linlathen, and knowing what grief it would occasion to a spirit kindred with his own, his sympathetic nature sought and found relief in the note which the reader will find in a following page. Mr. Erskine had no personal acquaintance with Richard Cobden. He knew him only as a public man, and as a friend of his friend Mrs. Schwabe. But the sad and sudden death of Mr. Cobden's only son opened the floodgates of a sympathy which poured itself out in one of the most touching letters of this chapter. It was his large capacity for sympathy which gave him such power as a consoler. He had, besides, a gospel of consolation to impart which he lost no opportunity to apply to the hearts of all, whatever the nature and source of their suffering, a gospel which embodied itself in one of his favourite hymns—a copy of which he was in the habit of sending to friends.

I say to thee, do thou repeat
To the first man thou mayest meet,
In lane, highway, or open street,

That he and we and all men move
Under a canopy of love,
As broad as the blue sky above.

* * * * *

And ere thou leave him say thou this
Yet one word more—they only miss
The winning of that final bliss

Who will not count it true that love,
Blessing, not cursing, rules above,
And that in it we live and move.

And one thing farther make him know,
That to believe these things are so
This firm faith never to forego,

Despite of all that seems at strife
With blessing, all with curses rife,
That *this* is blessing, *this* is life.

361. TO M. CRAMER MALLET.[1]

À Monsieur Cramer Mallet,
Rue des Belles Filles, Genève.

LINLATHEN, 21*st Jan.* 1841.

CHER MONSIEUR,—Les détails que vous avez eu la bonté de me donner sont bien intéressants. Elle est morte, comme elle vivait, en prière. Sa tâche est finie—l'objet, pour lequel elle était sur cette terre, est accompli—et maintenant elle est dans la paix éternelle. Tout cela est très-consolant, et cependant sa mort a fait un grand vide pour ceux qui l'ont connue et aimée, car son affection n'était pas une affection ordinaire ; il y avait une vivacité, une activité dans tous ses sentimens, qui exigeait de ceux qui étaient privilégiés d'en être les objets, une activité pareille, et ainsi s'emparait de leur vie, d'une manière toute particulière. Son affection n'était pas une chose terrestre, elle regardait toujours le bienêtre éternel de ceux qu'elle aimait, et exigeait d'eux qu'ils le regardassent aussi ; et ceux qui possédaient ses affections sentaient bien qu'ils possédaient aussi ses prières. Je connais bien la piété et la soumission

[1] On the death of his mother.

à la volonté de Dieu qui marquent le caractère de votre cher et digne père, mais quel changement pour lui ! J'avais le privilége journalier, d'être témoin de l'affection profonde et tendre qui faisait le bonheur de leur intérieur, et je puis me figurer la solitude et le silence qui règnent dans ces appartements, où ses doux accents se faisaient entendre, et répandaient les sentiments de son cœur.

Chère et excellente dame, oui, sa place vide à l'oratoire et dans la maison sera pour son mari un appel continuel à la suivre par le chemin étroit jusqu'au grand rendezvous des enfans de notre Père céleste—c'était dans ce chemin qu'elle marchait fidèlement, gardant son cœur, ses pensées, ses désirs—pour Dieu.

Je suis fâché d'écrire avec si peu de facilité en français ; autrement je vous écrirais souvent—et même je n'ai pas une conviction entière, que mon anglais est parfaitement intelligible à M. Cramer. Je vous remercie beaucoup de votre lettre, qui me donne un tableau parfait de ses derniers jours. La visite de la petite Sophie est très-intéressante. Ces enfans ont perdu une amie bien tendre et bien zélée pour leur bonheur éternel. Je bénis Dieu de la santé rétablie de leur chère et excellente mère, et je vous en félicite de tout mon cœur. Je pense souvent à votre ménage, et j'espère que vous me continuerez tous votre amitié. Présentez mes respects affectueux à votre cher père, et à tous vos frères, et l'expression de ma sympathie, et rappelez-moi à vos chères filles.—Votre dévoué,

T. ERSKINE.

362. TO MRS. BLACKWELL.

LINLATHEN, 23*d June* 1862.

MY LONG AND MUCH-LOVED FRIEND,—Time passes on, and those whom we have known and loved are withdrawing from this scene of things, so that the world looks more

desolate and deserted than it used to be. And yet this feeling really arises from the weakness of our spiritual vitality—a weakness however in which he evidently partook who said, "Lover and friend hast thou put from me, and my acquaintance into darkness;" but the faith which seeth who is invisible, ought to find all lost things laid up in Him. I can well understand the sorrow of your husband and yourself on the death of his dear mother—not only as a loving mother connected with all the sweetness and sadness of his earliest remembrance, but also as a living witness of the reality and power of spiritual things. And old Mrs. Lindsay's removal closes that generation which you had from infancy looked to with reverence and confidence.

We have lost Lord Torphichen and dear William Stirling, a specimen of patriarchal life, which is rare now upon the earth, and John Cockburn, whom you also, I daresay, knew in your youth. I speak of him as an old memory (for I have known him since the year 1794, almost seventy years ago), rather as an intimate than as one who filled any place in our society.

The Kippenross family, of which there were thirteen, now consist of two, the Captain and Mrs. Erskine, and we three still survive. How various are God's dealings with the human family! Each individual has a history of his own, peculiar to himself—the trials and events of his life all chosen and appointed by infinite love and infinite wisdom. One born in the heart of Africa, and brought up in savage life; another brought up amidst the deeper pollutions and depravity of English and French blackguardism; another in a pure and well-conducted Christian family. And the inward differences still greater than the outward—one born selfish, false, reckless, prone to violence or sensuality; another born generous,

conscientious, thoughtful! Yet each one is loved by God. He despiseth not the works of His own hands. But each soul has a different schooling. It is no sin to have selfish, sensual, violent propensities,—*the sin is to yield to them.* Resistance to the evils within us and without us constitutes the education of man; the sense of our own incompetency for the task is intended to lead us to take hold of God's strength. The view of the condition of our race on the face of the earth has led me to believe in a doctrine of Election, though a doctrine different from that which generally goes under the name. I believe that the whole human race is as a great colossal man, and that every individual is created to fill a place in that body, and that his original construction and the circumstances in which he is placed are all appointed with the purpose of fitting him to fill his destined place. He has the power of co-operating in or resisting this purpose of God (for goodness consists in choosing to be good, not in being made good whether he will or not), but I believe that God will persevere in His training until every child of Adam is harmoniously united to Jesus the God-man, the head of the moral creation, however long the process may be. I cannot look on the condition of 999 out of every thousand of our species without coming to that conclusion.

He hath said to us, "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good," and I am sure that He gives us no precept which is not a part of His own character and conduct. He is the Shepherd, who when He has lost a sheep seeks diligently *until* He finds it. Farewell, dear dear friend and old friend.—Ever affectionately yours,

T. ERSKINE.

That St. Paul took the same view of Election that I have done is evident to me from what he writes in the Epistle

to the Romans, 11th chapter, from the 25th verse to the end. To suppose that the process of restoration that he there indicates is only applicable to people whilst they are on this earth seems to me unreasonable, and even monstrous.

I daresay I have said this to you before, but it appears to me so important that I am not sorry to repeat it, for I cannot conceive how a reasoning mind can arrive at a full trust in God for himself and his fellow-creatures without such an assurance.

363. TO MISS PRISCILLA MAURICE.[1]

LINLATHEN, 21*st Oct.* 1850.

DEAR FRIEND,—I suppose that you are fast journeying to your rest, and I wish once again, before you leave this scene of things, to send you a word of sympathy. I have been refreshed and quickened by reading your book on the duties and consolations of the sick, and I have felt thankful on your behalf that in such circumstances as yours you have been sustained to write it. It is a loving legacy to leave to your brethren. What a full and pregnant thing life is, when God is known; and what a weary emptiness it is without Him! The gift of existence would be indeed an intolerable burden if one did not believe fully that He who is the Fountain of existence is able to give it a true and unfailing interest. Without that faith what reflecting spirit could join in the thanksgiving for "creation and preservation"? Dear friend, you can thank God for creation, for it has been to you an introduction into His own eternal fulness. I am a sinner, yet I feel as if my God had given me a claim on Him, a deep undeni-

[1] Sister of the Rev. F. D. Maurice, and authoress of the *Trials and Blessings of Sickness.*

able claim on Him, by drawing me out of the rest of nothingness into this conscious existence, this consciousness of emptiness, this capacity of horror from this emptiness unfilled. But all this emptiness is another name for the capacity of being filled,—filled, dear friend, with God. The river of God is full of water, and He will moisten and fill these parched hearts of ours out of the river of His own Life. Whatever fears, whatever doubts, may stir within us, of weariness and withering, let us be ready with our answer: Christ in me, the hope, the eternal hope, of satisfying joy. The untiring state of a spirit is love and duty, and these we have in the Father and the Son. "Thou art my hiding-place." "Because I live, ye shall live also." Farewell.—Ever affectionately yours,

T. ERSKINE.

364. TO M. ADOLPHE MONOD.

LINLATHEN, 17*th March* 1851.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I write to express my sympathy in the natural human sorrow which the death of your mother must have occasioned in your wide family circle. I knew the love and veneration in which she was held by you all, and so can easily conceive, assisted by my own analogous experience, the feelings which her removal will produce.

A father, and especially a mother, is a true substantial gospel, proclaimed to every child of man from his infancy, the gospel of a love which may be perfectly relied on, and with which no idea of its having been earned or merited is even connected—the gospel of a love which longs for a return, and is grieved until it is returned, but yet remains unexhausted although unreturned.

When I was absent from home I could always count with certainty on my mother's letters, however irregular I might have been myself in writing to her. She was to me the

type of an untiring love, ready to explain and forget every neglect—a love which identified itself with me and my character and doings, feeling for anything wrong in me as acutely as if she had done it herself. On looking back, I always feel the guilt of ingratitude heavy on me, the want of appreciating that silent bearing of my burden which nothing but truest love can teach, "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ,"—not the law imposed on us by Christ, but the law of His own being, the law which love imposed on Him in relation to us, and which nothing but love could impose. And the truly loving parent partakes in these sufferings of Christ for her children, as we ought to do for all men, thus becoming fellow-workers with Him. Dear friend, I often wish for your presence, for your friendly look and your friendly voice—I don't say heart, for distance cannot affect that.

Give my kindly regards to your brother Frederick, and to your wife and children. My sister joins with me in love to you all.—Ever affectionately yours, T. ERSKINE.

365. TO MRS. SCHWABE.

38 CHARLOTTE SQUARE, *Aug.* 7, 1853.

DEAR FRIEND,—I cannot express to you how much I have been touched by your letter. That in such a time of agony you should have written so long and full an outpouring of your heart implies such a confidingness of friendship that I feel I can give no adequate answer to it. This is partly the cause why I have allowed it to remain so long unacknowledged; but besides this, I thought that you would have so many letters coming in upon you, that it seemed to me better to wait a little while. I can suppose, however, that while other people are getting more calm, you are coming only more fully to comprehend the greatness of your loss—the affectionate friend and husband, the

wise counsellor and adviser to whom you were accustomed to have recourse in all your difficulties. And now, beloved friend, when a difficulty comes, you have not only it to contend against, but you have also the bitter feeling that the faithful counsellor is no longer at your side who used to make all things easy.

I thank God that He has not allowed you to sink under the blow, but that He has given you visions of bliss, and that He has given you to know and feel that you are not alone; that the Husband of the widow and the Father of the orphan is always with you, and that your departed friend, though no longer visible to the outward eye, is still near you to the spirit, and visible to the inward eye. I am thankful also, and above all, that you have found the comfort of knowing that all genuine human feeling has its source in God, so that we may count on a true sympathy from His infinite heart. And as He thus partakes our feelings, He would have us partake in His eternal light and life and love, seeing the end and purpose of all sorrow in the light of His infinite love. The Son has been given to us that in His Spirit we may apprehend the Father thus as the Ocean-Fountain of holy love. I have no doubt but your departed one sees and tastes the sweetness of these things far more than he did on earth whilst in the body. . . . I gave you Ps. cxli. 4; now I would give cvii. and Lam. iii. The last verse of Ps. cvii. shows that the whole of the former part of it contains a description of the way in which God exercises His loving-kindness.

366. TO THE SAME.

122 GEORGE STREET, EDINBURGH,
27th April 1856.

DEAR FRIEND,—I have just heard of your return to England, and of the melancholy event which has occasioned

it. It seems to be your vocation to weep with those that weep, to be brought into connection with the suffering and the sorrowful, that you may give them that comfort which true sympathy cannot fail to supply. We grieve for the Cobdens,[1]—an only son, a first-born, so suddenly snatched away without the satisfaction of watching over him and meeting his last looks. I don't wonder at their desire to see you, as the friend who had last seen him, and who could repeat to them some of his words, and perhaps tell them things indicating a noble and loving nature in him which promised to develop itself in much that was great and good. You may tell them these things, and enter into their sorrow with a true human and maternal heart. And yet I feel that the best human sympathy really fails in its object if it does not help the mourner to rise to a living fountain of sympathising love at the top and centre of all things, on which he may depend with absolute confidence, not only for real sympathy, but also for doing what is best, and wisest, and kindest. And does not that parental relation which has given your poor friends so much joy, and is now giving them so much sorrow—does not that mysterious relation of love conduct us up to the same top and centre of the Universe, revealing to us that that central fountain and regulator is a father's and mother's heart? If this be not so, we are all orphans, and if this be so, we have all a Father who is training us, by a way that His wisdom sees best, into a participation in His own character, His own love and truth and righteousness, and feeling with us in all the duties and difficulties and sorrows which that discipline requires. The idea of a sorrowing God shocks the minds of many. It does not shock mine; I cannot conceive love being without sorrow. I cannot believe that man can give me a sympathy which God does

[1] Mrs. Schwabe was a great friend of the Cobdens.

not give me; I cannot believe that man can give me a sympathy which does not flow into him from God; and if any one should say to me, Why does an omnipotent God bring creatures into existence who grieve themselves and cause grief to Him? I answer, God, in making men, made creatures whom He desired to be good; goodness means choosing to be good; they cannot be made good, they must choose it, and omnipotence cannot do that without unmaking the man; wise and loving training must do it. God desires the joy of seeing His creatures choose to be good, and the capacity of choosing to be good implies the capacity of refusing to be good, and thus the possibility of such a joy is always accompanied with the risk of a great sorrow, which sorrow, I believe, God knows and feels. Your friends do not sorrow as those without hope. They hope to see their child again, no longer a child, but what his childhood promised. He is still in God's school, under his Father's eye and training; they also themselves are in God's school, in another room from their boy, but under the same eye, the same guidance, as he and we all are. And it seems to me that we might have a real communion with all the scholars in that great school, whether here or elsewhere, if we were to cultivate as we might our relation with our heavenly Teacher and Father. We are members one of another; we belong to one great whole; we can never sever ourselves from them, do what we will; but our communion would be of the right and blessed kind were we to make it our continual business to enter into the mind and purpose of God concerning us and all men, and so to become conscious and willing fellow-workers with Him in working out that great salvation which consists in the spiritual rightness of all humanity. I need not say to you that this is the view which Christianity gives of God; it sets Jesus Christ before

us sympathising with and participating in every form of human suffering in order that He might draw men up to love and righteousness; and through His whole course He tells us that it was as the Revealer of the Father that He appeared on earth; thus signifying that it was by no act of omnipotence that man was to be redeemed from the power of sin, which is in fact from the power of selfishness, but by a true sympathy, a true holy love. God bearing man's burden with him, God, as it were, sacrificing Himself that man might learn to sacrifice himself,—this is the sympathy which can alone heal the broken heart with true healing. And what a teaching there is in sorrow! How it elevates and enriches the spirit! The Cobdens did not desire your presence merely because you were the last friend who had seen their son; they desired to see you because they knew that you had yourself sorrowed, that the soil of your heart had been deepened and fertilised by having the ploughshare of sorrow passing through it. The veriest triflers learn wisdom through sorrow; as I look back on my own life I find all the most remarkable epochs marked by the deathbeds of those whom I loved. These were fresh starting-points for the character. This must be a common experience. Then again, how much has Mr. Cobden's sorrow changed my whole feeling towards him. I before thought of him only as a public man; I admired his talent and his public spirit, and I knew him as the holder of certain views of social policy, with some of which I agreed, and with some I disagreed. But now I feel towards him as a suffering man, as a bereaved father, and as an affectionate husband, as one opening his heart to human sympathy. Thus sorrow breaks down the barriers and removes the boundaries which separate us from each other. And now, dear friend, to carry this thought still further, do you not think that, whilst we regard God as a

great sovereign, just and generous it may be, but out of the reach of our joys and sorrows, not needing our love, but only requiring it as a duty, we may talk of loving Him, but it is only talk? we cannot love Him till we know that in His heart there dwells a true humanity, a capacity of sorrow, an actual suffering under all the sin and sorrow of His creatures, a need of our love and of our sympathy, until we see him manifested in the Man who wept at the grave of Lazarus, who wept over Jerusalem, and drank the cup of human suffering even to its dregs. As I was writing, Miss —— came in and told me she had just fallen in with an account of Luther's feelings when he lost his little daughter Madeleine.[1] It struck me that it might be soothing to your friends to read it and to mix their sorrow with that of the stout but tender-hearted Reformer.

367. TO MISS LUCY GASON.

EDINBURGH, 3*d Sept.* 1856.

DEAR FRIEND,—Davie counts on your love, for entering into her deep sorrow and great consolation at this time, when it has pleased our loving Father to remove from her her worthy husband. She asked me to-day to write to you, adding, "I know that she loved him for his own sake as well as for mine." I am sure that no one could have known him without loving him, he was so simple-hearted and so trustworthy, so faithful, so affectionate. He died on Monday last, after three days of a severe death-struggle, and after ten months of illness from which he seemed often on the point of emerging. Those who knew him can give thanks for what God had given him to know and to be; he had been a real brother to us all, and has done us good and not evil since ever he has been connected

[1] Michelet's *Life of Luther*, pp. 298-9.

with us. He came after another James was taken away, a James whom no one else could ever replace, as you can well understand; but he has been a true brother, helpful in everything that was right, and as a husband to our sister, one of ten thousand. Well, we have still a better Brother, who has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light, who has given us, and gives us, what enables us to give thanks for all things—for existence itself which in dark moments seems an immense and intolerable burden from which there is no escape. Dear friend, although we have seen little of each other during these forty years, I yet look to you as a loving friend on whose sympathy I can fully trust. Nothing can happen to you, in which I would not feel an interest, and I believe that you so partake of the mind of Christ that you feel a loving oneness with us in all that concerns us. 'Christian joins her love.—Ever affectionately yours, T. ERSKINE.

I expect to be at Linlathen in a couple of days.

368. TO F. RUSSELL, ESQ.[1]

LINLATHEN, DUNDEE, *25th July* 1855.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I must not delay to answer your most touching letter. You seem to find it good to be afflicted, and as I believe the only real good consists in the discovery of an unseen spiritual portion in the love of God, so I believe that discovery is generally made through the rent veil of the flesh of visible and temporal hopes and possessions. And when the spirit does really meet its Father, and find Him to be the infinite loving One, giving us His love, and asking our loving confidence, then it understands that word of the Man of Sorrows, "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted." There is

[1] On being informed of the death of Mr. R.'s wife.

no brotherhood like the brotherhood of sorrow. The true purpose of sorrow is to reveal a need and the Supplier of all need: and its consolation, as you say, does not consist in teaching us to undervalue the blessings that have been removed, but by showing us that what constituted their essence, their true value, is not and cannot be taken from us:—*for all live in Him.* Dear friend, the peace of God be with you; and may He provide good guidance and good protection to your little ones. I am glad that I have seen her—I never could forget her—that delicacy of nature and texture that one could weep at. But all live in Him. —Ever affectionately yours, T. ERSKINE.

369. TO THE SAME.[1]

LINLATHEN, 17*th Nov.* 1857.

DEAR MR. RUSSELL,—Another transplanting! Is not that the true name for it? The family at present has two homes, and here is one going from the lower home to the higher, where the earthly mother and the heavenly Father are ready to welcome her. Yet it is sad; it is the bridge of sighs over which she has to pass to the better home.

I should have been in Edinburgh, in our old abode, 38 Charlotte Square, had not my sister Mrs. Stirling been laid up by a feverish attack, which has lasted near a fortnight, and still keeps her chiefly in bed. But *we* are near the age of man—the threescore and ten.

Hoping to see you soon, with much sympathy I remain yours truly, T. ERSKINE.

370. TO MR. MAURICE.

LINLATHEN, 30*th Oct.* 1858.

DEAR FRIEND,—I know how united you have been as a family, and what a place Miss Maurice held with you all—

[1] On being informed of the death of Mr. R.'s daughter, two years old.

not as a sister merely, but almost as a mother, and hence I can well suppose the sorrow of this bereavement. I know also your consolations; I know that you are persuaded that nothing that is really worth keeping can ever be lost, and that, as we have fellowship with our Lord though we see Him not, so through Him we may continue our fellowship with His members, though withdrawn from our mortal sight. And yet it remains true that this life becomes more and more bare as it gets older: those who were parts of our existence when it began, and who have been the objects on which our affections have been trained and exercised so as to have become identified with those affections, are removed from our natural contact; we have none like-minded who are acquainted with the early scenes of our childhood, and to whom the persons and places and events connected with our first remembrances have the same charm as they have to ourselves. I feel this very much. I completed my seventieth year a few days ago, and now when I look round my circle of friends, I find few contemporaries—few to whom what I say of past things does not require an explanation.

You will feel the want of your sister, the want of an accustomed love and confidence; but to those who look to her from without, the thought of her is most beautiful and animating. Her unselfish unceasing devotion to that which she believed to be right, and her large sympathy with all humanity, and her untiring activity, are gifts which it is good to think of, and good to give thanks for, wherever they are seen.

I hope Mrs. Maurice is not suffering much, and that your boys are what you could wish. We have been grieved to hear how ill Mrs. Powell has been. 'Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done.'—Ever affectionately yours,

T. ERSKINE.

371. TO MRS. STORY.[1]

16 CHARLOTTE SQUARE, 28*th Nov.* 1859.

DEAR MRS. STORY,—I can in some measure understand the mingled feelings which must have filled your heart when your loving and excellent husband was taken from your sight. The conviction that the change was to him great gain, and yet the sense of a void not to be filled again in this world—the recollections of the past and the realisations of what was behind *that* mysterious curtain, and the blessed hope that maketh not ashamed, the hope of the completion of the work of redemption, when the family of God shall be for ever re-united in their common glorious Head, "whom having not seen you love, and in whom, though now you see Him not, you can yet rejoice with a joy unspeakable and full of glory."

Dear friend, yet a little while! It is indeed a mysterious curtain which separates the dead from the living, when surely on both sides of it there is such a desire to communicate with each other; but He who is the Lord both of the dead and the living doeth all things well, and is Himself the living medium through whom we may have true fellowship with the whole family in heaven and on earth.

I can now perfectly reproduce to myself my first impression of him, with his beautiful radiant countenance, in that lovely country, when he was standing a faithful witness for truth, in opposition to many gainsayers. It is now thirty years ago, and many are gone who were with us then, and the witness which was then borne has been seed which the Lord has blessed to many, and your husband and you must have felt it as a great mercy that a son has been given you to carry forward the witness which his father bore. It

[1] On the death of her husband, the Rev. Robert Story, Roseneath.

must be a great consolation to you in this bereavement to have a son so qualified, and to have your daughters settled to your mind.

You have my sympathy both in your sorrow and in your consolation.

The Lord hear thee in the day of trouble, and fulfil His own mind to thee and thine.—Yours ever truly,

T. ERSKINE.

372. TO MRS. MACNABB.[1]

Feb. 1860.

DEAR FRIEND,—I feel a desire to write to you, and yet it is chiefly to say to you that I feel for you, and in some measure feel with you, under this heavy blow. I know that your grief is great, and I know that you acknowledge in it the hand of the Father, who afflicteth not willingly, but to make us partakers of His holiness. And yet you know that He intends that you should suffer, and that His purpose in it would be resisted if you did not suffer. I can only then desire for you, and for the affectionate mourners around you, that you should suffer according to the loving will of God, that you and they may learn more of Him as the true eternal portion of man's spirit, that you may learn more to live as strangers and pilgrims on the earth, trusting in Him and having fellowship with Him who hath created and redeemed us, and orders all things for us, that we may be partakers of the Divine nature, and of that eternal life which He Himself lives, and which is holiness and love and blessedness. A bond has been broken which I believe has had more tenderness in it than is generally found in similar bonds, but there is a bond remaining which our Lord indicates when He says, "I in you, and you in me,"—a bond uniting us to God and also to each other, which is not to

[1] On the death of her husband.

be broken, belonging as it does to the Divine nature, being in truth Christ Himself, resting in which we may in all circumstances rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. This is the fourth heavy sorrow under which I have known you, and it is the heaviest of them all. I always loved your husband and admired his purity and tenderness, and the delicate affection of his nature, and I in some measure felt what he was as a husband and a father and a friend. I felt how deep and unselfish an interest he took in all with whom he was connected. I was much impressed with that feature of his character when I last saw him in Barry's Hotel, and I know the hold that such a quality takes of the hearts of those who are daily under its influence. When I saw him at that time I had the feeling that he was not well, that the gift which you all had in him was precarious and anxious. But then, in whose hand was he? in whose hand are you all? This is the everlasting consolation, dear friend. You would feel the mercy of James being in Europe, and being able to soothe the last hours of his father, and of Flora being also back in time. Farewell; the peace of God be with you all.—Ever affectionately yours,

T. ERSKINE.

373. TO AN ANONYMOUS CORRESPONDENT.

DEAR FRIEND,—I wish I could answer your most interesting letter to any good purpose, that is, with any profit to your spirit, but I fear that what I have to say may sound to you like cant and conventionality. This fear has kept me hitherto from answering you, and I now only write because I feel that it would be a positive sin not to answer such an outpouring in some sort or other.

You have had a father and a mother who loved you, and whose love was to you a holy thing, and yet an assured

possession. You know that nothing could deprive you of it, but the cessation of their being. This love was the home in which you were brought up, and where is it now? Are you now homeless? a homeless orphan, having once had such a home? or was not that only an outward sign of an invisible everlasting thing, a symbol of an Infinite heart, in which you are ever living and moving and having your being, and which cares for you in its measure, as those hearts did in theirs? This is your true everlasting home, the Father's house in which there are many mansions. But no love can be a home to us until we are sensible of it, until we open our hearts to let it in. Now here the difficulty lies. The fact of an earthly home is a thing most palpable; as is also the earnestly watchful love of father and mother; but God is invisible, and though He is the giver of all other loves, the Fountain from the which their current runs, or else dries up, we have little personal acquaintance with Him, and we even are disposed to regard Him more as a great power of Nature than as a Being who can follow each of us with an individual interest, and as one who can really love and need to be loved in return, and who can be grieved by neglect. But if the relations of human life are types by which He explains His own relations to us, His love must be of this kind. And if we consider our own consciences attentively and patiently, we shall find that they present to us the reality of that incarnation of which the Gospel is the history, the entrance of God into our nature, to charge Himself with all our burdens, to grieve over all our sins, and to animate us in our weakness with a feeling of the everlasting strength of right. Does He not follow each man as if he were His sole care? Is not this Christianity?—the Divine Sonship let down into our nature from the bosom of God, suffering in us and for us the just for the unjust, that it may bring us back to the Father, and

giving us the assurance at the same time that the bond which unites us to God is indissoluble? The heart of the Son must suffer at seeing the Father so little honoured, and it is by our entering into His suffering that we are reinstated into our right position. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and gave His Son to take away our sins."

374. TO THE REV. CHARLES MONEY.

LINLATHEN, DUNDEE, 17*th June* 1862.

DEAR FRIEND,—I have heard from Mrs. Cameron that you are in very deep sorrow, that the Lord has laid His hand heavily on you. But it is His hand, our Father's hand, who afflicteth not willingly, but for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness. I have this morning been reading the 22d Psalm, the cry of Him who was afflicted more than any man, and He seems to seek and find a rest for His spirit, not in anything which could distinguish Him from any child of Adam, but in that which was common to Him with them all. 'Thou art He that took me out of my mother's womb. I belong to Thee, I have none to look to but Thee. I am Thine, oh save me. There is no created thing that can help me, it must be Thyself. Thou hast made me for Thyself, and it is Thyself only that can help me or satisfy me.' The universal temptation is to give to God's gifts the place which belongs to God Himself, so that we seek our satisfaction in them and not in Himself; and yet we can only have the eternal life in so far as we know Him and feel Him to be our portion, and thus enter into sympathy with Him and with His loving purpose towards ourselves and all others. I believe that we cannot truly and rightly love God's gifts until we know the Giver and can discern Him in His gifts. I know well

that it cannot be a full consolation to you to believe, and even to experience, that you are to be brought nearer to God by this stroke. God gave you in her an object whom you knew and loved as an individual. He intended that you should so love her, and He knew that if, in taking her, He had said, 'I will give you something better,' He would have been in some sort mocking your sorrow. You would have said, 'I loved her herself; anything, even though better, is not what can satisfy the affection which Thou hast given me for her.' I believe that this is often overlooked. God loves us as individuals, and He intends that we should love and appreciate others as individuals. Observe the endless variety of human characters. He knows the idiosyncrasy of each one, and He desires both to receive sympathy from each one according to that idiosyncrasy, and to give this to each one in the same way. "How precious are Thy thoughts unto me, O God! and how great is the sum of them!" He has counted the hairs of our heads. I believe that nothing is lost but evil, and that there is a special purpose of wise love in all God's gifts to us, therefore she is not lost, but laid up by God for Him and for you. I believe that God is love, and that love demands sympathy. Benevolence may be satisfied with a general well-being in its objects, but this does not satisfy love. Love is not satisfied with submission; it requires that we should enter into its purposes. Our Lord's prayer for us is, "I in them, and Thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one." Beloved Charles, this is our high vocation, and we are to be trained for it by entering into the mind of God in all His appointments. I thank God for all the affection which I have experienced from my fellow-creatures. I endeavour to receive it and remember it as a pledge of His love, His love to me, His love to each individual. He has taught me by it that He has made me for sympathy, to find my

happiness in sympathy, and has thus drawn me upward to seek His own sympathy, as that which harmonises and sanctifies all lower sympathies. I often look back to Venice, and to the love which I met there, and thank God for it. I think of your loving and beloved mother, and dear Mary, and all the rest, and the excellent and venerable father.[1] You were highly privileged in being born into a house of love, stamping on your young minds the image of our Father's house above, where ever remains the spiritual and eternal types of all human affections. Let us then set our affections on things above, on that which is really heavenly, even in the things which are on earth,—for when we see and love God in His gifts, our affections are really set on things above, whilst we love things which are on earth. Give my best love to your mother (and mine), and to the sister and the brothers.—Ever affectionately yours,

T. ERSKINE.

375. TO DR. JOHN BROWN.[2]

3 CHARLOTTE SQUARE, 7*th Jan.* 1864.

YES, my dear friend, I am sure you are nothing but grateful to God for her release. He had His own wise and loving purpose in detaining her here so long, in that state of mind which He had permitted and appointed, and she and you will doubtless one day know and rejoice in the accomplished effect of that purpose; but we can without hesitation acknowledge the mercy of her deliverance. What a blessed and glorious thing human existence would be, if we fully realised that the infinitely wise and infinitely powerful God loves each one of us with an intensity infinitely beyond what the most fervid human spirit ever

[1] See Appendix No. II.

[2] On the death of his wife.

felt towards another, and with a concentration as if He had none else to think of! It is to His hands that you have to trust her, and it is in His hands that she now is, always has been, and always will be. And this love has brought us into being, just that we might be taught to enter into full sympathy with Him, receiving His,—giving our own —thus entering into the joy of our Lord. This is the hope—the sure and certain hope—set before us; sure and certain, for "the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee."

I always hope to be a better man by everything of the kind I hear—more free from the bondage of corruption, selfishness, and seen things; and more thoroughly possessed with the conviction that at every step in the journey of life I have the opportunity given me of being a fellow-worker with God in working out this great salvation.—Ever affectionately yours, T. ERSKINE.

376. TO MR. THOMAS CONSTABLE.

LINLATHEN, 23*d June* 1865.

MY DEAR MR. CONSTABLE,—Ever since I heard of that great affliction, I have desired and intended to express my sympathy with you and Mrs. Constable. I do not know any two persons who by the tenderness of their natures were more fitted to feel all the agony of such an occurrence. At the same time, I know that both of you live under the deep conviction that nothing can happen by accident—that God overrules all things, and has a gracious and wise purpose in adapting them to our spiritual education.

I know that you can never escape from this suffering

except by realising this loving purpose of your heavenly Father,—and thus He, as it were, lays it on you as a necessity, to have Him and His loving purpose ever present in your thoughts as your only refuge from agony.

If such is the purpose of God in permitting this tragical event (and what other purpose with regard to you two can we suppose Him to have had?), is it not your wisdom to make use of it for this purpose, and whenever it recurs to your minds, just to accept it as a direct call from Him to keep near to Him, to listen to what He will speak, assured that His only desire is to wean you from the power of seen things, and to make you partakers of His own eternal life?

Most assuredly our Father has had a wise and loving purpose in this thing, towards the child and the parents:—the education of the child was to be carried on better in other circumstances, and the parents were to learn that God was the only satisfying portion of the souls which He has made.

I suggest these things—though it is probable that the very same thought has occurred to yourselves. May the consolations of God be with you!

It is always pleasant to me to write your name, and even to think of it.—Yours affectionately, T. ERSKINE.

377. TO GENERAL MACDOWALL.

11 GREAT STUART STREET, *24th Feb.* 1866.

BELGIORNO CARISSIMO,—You have already received, through Davie, Henry's letter about his son. The love and esteem which he had earned for himself enhance the loss,—but yet how sweet they are! I hope that his dear mother will learn to feel that he is not lost, and that he is in the same Hand as she herself is.

Our calling is to know God, and to know Him as our satisfying portion, in which we may always find a full joy, sustaining us under all events, however in themselves painful. I cannot fight against grief by main force; it is only by an opposite joy that I can master it. I may control the expression of it by effort, but not itself. In the same way I can restrain the expression of anger, vanity, covetousness, by an effort, but I can only overcome themselves by the joy and love of God within my heart.

How are you, dear friend, in your bodily health? Our outward bothers are, I suppose, intended very much to press upon us the necessity of having that inward well of living water which may refresh and gladden our souls in all circumstances.

My sisters send their love along with mine to Eleanor and you.—Ever affectionately, T. ERSKINE.

378. TO MRS. MATHEWS.[1]

STROWAN, CRIEFF, 18*th June* 1868.

MY DEAR MRS. MATHEWS,—I have been long of acknowledging your sorrowful letter. What a change has come over the world for you and for me since we first met at Hamburg! and yet, though the change has sometimes appeared darkness and not light, we have never received anything during all that time which was not appointed for us by unerring wisdom and unchanging love these many years, and yet how little we have realised it! We shall one day know it, however, even as we are known. It must seem strange to you to think of your daughter as a widow, as one who has outstripped you in the path of sorrow, if not in the race of life. I hope she may learn to lean wholly on the care and tenderness of God,—to

[1] See Appendix No. III.

speak to Him and to expect an answer, and to get one,—to get strength and consolation and guidance, and to know that she has a Friend ever near, who is always thinking of her as if He had nothing else to think of. It is possible that she has never before actually felt herself in His hand, continually sustained by Him, and this may be the turning-point.

I am here at a most beautiful place, where I used to be a good deal in my youth, and which is associated in my memory with many who are now "*retirés d'entre nous*," and who have passed the mysterious boundary which separates us from the departed. I would send my affectionate regards to your husband. Farewell, dear friend; I have great confidence in your love.—Ever truly yours,

T. ERSKINE.

CHAPTER X.

Reminiscences by Arthur P. Stanley, D.D., Dean of Westminster.

You ask me to give an account of my recollections of the conversations of Thomas Erskine. I have always felt that whilst it was impossible to form any conception of the man except from his conversations, it is almost equally impossible to give to one who had no experience of them an adequate idea of what those conversations were.

Their peculiarity consisted, if I may use words which I have employed in another place, and to which I may refer for my general impression of his place in the religious history of Scotland,[1] in the exquisite grace and ease with which he passed from the earthly to the heavenly, from the humorous to the serious, from the small things of daily affection or business to the great things of the ideal world. It resembled the flight which I have seen amongst the innumerable sea-fowl in the neighbourhood of the Bass Rock, in which the wild birds dart with equal felicity out into the air, or feed upon the rocks, or dive and play in the deep waters. All three elements seem alike familiar to them. So it was with the topics of conversation over which our friend's mind glanced to and fro. I can only profess to give some notion of his manner by a succession of fragmentary instances.

The Psalms.—He was, as you are aware, in the habit of

[1] *Lectures on the History of the Church of Scotland.*

reading in the family devotions the Psalms and Lessons as they occur in the calendar of the Church of England. He used to say, "I greatly value the fixed order in which this calendar induces me to go through the various parts of the Bible irrespectively of my own predilection or fancies;" and then he would add, with a twinkle of his peculiar humour, "And this, I think, is the one single spiritual benefit which I have derived from the Church of England."

On one of these occasions the Psalm which he read was the 136th, where the words occur: "Who smote Egypt and their first-born; for His mercy endureth for ever. Who overthrew Pharaoh and his host in the Red Sea; for His mercy endureth for ever." "Yes," he said, in speaking of it afterwards, "that has a meaning beyond what the Psalmist knew. There was mercy even for Pharaoh; even Egypt and their first-born had a place in the mercy of God. Egypt and Assyria shall be blessed in the midst of the land." And then, with the same thought darting forward to the stern text in the New Testament, "Jacob have I loved, and Esau have I hated,"—"Yes," he said, "but Jacob was chosen for *his* special purpose, and Esau, that fine generous character, was rejected yet preserved for another purpose not less special." "The purpose of God for all of us is to make us better. He can have no other intention for us."

He spoke also of the 137th Psalm: "By the waters of Babylon we sat down and wept: when we remembered thee, O Zion!" "How extraordinary," he said, "the contrast of the feelings brought together in this Psalm! Can anything be imagined more tender, more poetic, than its beginning? Can anything be imagined more fierce and savage than the tremendous curse with which it ends?—'Blessed shall he be that taketh and dasheth thy children against the stones.'"

He touched also on the 139th Psalm, with its description of the penetrating omniscience of God. "That is the Psalm which I should wish to have before me on my deathbed."

"How natural and free are the expressions of the Psalms! They begin with that great universal benediction on the upright honest man, 'the noblest work of God,' and they end with the generous universal invocation of all nature —'Let every thing that hath breath'—every creature, without limit or exception—'praise the Lord.'"

"How admirable are the 90th, 91st, and 103d Psalms! Never surely were any writings like these of David! Do tell me, you who know history, has any other king written anything of the kind? Listen to the 23d Psalm! Listen to the 1st Psalm!" And he then repeated both these from memory in Hebrew.

"'There is mercy with Thee, for Thou renderest to every man according to his works.' That is a very fine passage; and so is this, 'He that believeth shall not make haste.' There are some who are so fond in all matters of snatching, that they snatch here and there, 'and grudge if they be not satisfied.'"

Here are remarks on more general subjects.

"The redemption in Jesus Christ is shown to us by His own redemption of Himself; by His own faith persevering to the end, even to the giving up of His life, which is what is signified by His blood. 'Into Thy hands I commend my spirit,'—that expresses the supreme purpose of His life and death."

"The day of judgment is not only the last day: it is a judgment, a crisis, like others in life. We are judged that we may be taught, not taught that we may be judged."

He was fond of dwelling on the passages in the Bible which bring out the overbalance of love and mercy as

against vengeance and wrath. "This," he said, "shows the right proportion of faith." And one of these to which he often referred was the close of the second commandment —"visiting the sins of the fathers unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me, and *showing mercy* unto—(not "thousands," as of individuals—but—) UNTO THE THOUSANDTH AND THOUSANDTH GENERATION—(quoting the words of the Hebrew original—) *of them that love me.*" I never read that part of the commandment without thinking of this saying, and of the tones in which he uttered it.

"Can anything be finer than Judah's speech on behalf of Benjamin?"[1]

He would often speak of the incidents in life which seem like steps in our spiritual education. "Every one," he used to say, "ought to cherish with peculiar care the one instance in life which seems to him not to have been fortuitous, as St. Paul did the vision on the way to Damascus."

I had mentioned to him immediately after my appointment to the Deanery of Westminster that I was startled by hearing in the service on the day of my installation a special prayer which had always been used on such occasions in Westminster Abbey, that the new-comer might be enabled to do his best for the *enlargement* of God's Church, the very thing which seemed to me most important to be done. This delighted him. "That," he said, "is your oracle or χρησμός—just like the oracle delivered at Delphi to Socrates: an oracle said a hundred times before, yet at last lighting on the man who felt it."

He often spoke of the difficulty of accommodating himself entirely to any one form of Christian worship. "I am inclined," he said once, "to think," with a full sense of the

[1] Genesis xliv.

humour of what he was saying, "that the last and best revision of the Liturgy would be to enjoin absolute silence."

Critical Remarks.—He had no turn for critical inquiries himself, but was much delighted in conversing about them with others. When he first read Renan's book he exclaimed, "This is beautiful! If it is to be answered at all, it should be answered in French, as fine as its own French, and by another Pascal! Throughout the book it is evident that the author entertains a far higher idea of Christ than he likes to confess even to himself."

In speaking of the objection which religious people have to historical investigations into the origin of the Sacred Books, he said it reminded him always of the speech of an old woman to Miss Dundas, who was telling her of the journey of Sir David Dundas to Palestine, "Ye 'll no' tell me that there 's such a place on earth as Jerusalem."

"The *Λογία* of St. Matthew contains not only the teaching of Christ, but Christ Himself. Look at the seventh chapter."

Personal Remarks.—Here are a few anecdotes, personal or historical, partly interesting in themselves, but partly because they recall the peculiar emphasis with which he related them.

"'Do you know what the Covenant is?' was said to an old Scottish wife. 'I dinna ken what it is, but I 'll *mainteen* 't.' That expresses a vast amount of common theology."

"What is so very remarkable in the Old Testament is the continuity of the successive teachers. How striking are those words at the end of the 72d Psalm, even though they don't specially relate to it—'The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended.' He had nothing more or greater to ask for than the petitions of the 72d Psalm."

"Those who make religion their God will not have God for their religion."

"How I wish that Paul were here for a month to tell us what he meant by χάρισμα in the 5th chapter of the Epistle to the Romans! How I wish that he had but just spoken a little more distinctly!

"The beginning of the Epistle to the Romans seems to me to be just this: 'It does not matter what church you belong to; the Gospel is for all those who believe.' This goes through all the churches. The Epistles to the Ephesians and the Colossians are the finest of all. The second Epistle to the Corinthians is the more interesting."

"We ought not to deny the existence of anything because of the difficulty of imagining how it exists. To deny the existence of rational creatures in the moon because it is difficult to imagine them there, is like the priest who not being able to find the Baptismal Service in the Mass-book, said, 'C'est un enfant très-difficile à baptiser.'"

To the question, What is to be said of the moral purpose of the worst characters of mankind?—"Characters," he said, "like Iago or Judas, or like many of the depraved classes of great towns, are to be explained by the detestation of evil they cause in themselves and others. The conversion of Judas might result from the new fact of seeing his own sin."

"Christianity in its progress through the world has had less than its due. Mohammedanism in its progress has had more."

He had a strong conviction that in Romans iii. 22 "the faith of Christ" meant "the faith of Christ in His Father." I mentioned that this was identically the view entertained by Mr. Dunbar Heath, who was deprived of his benefice for holding this amongst other doctrines. Mr. Erskine had never heard of him.

"There are some men who are profuse in giving out of their own mind what they have. Such a one was Bunsen: that is noble. There are others who economise and keep to themselves what they have, unless they find those whom they think worthy to hear it. Such has been some other one: that is ignoble."

A servant of William Stirling of Keir, in 1713, was called to give evidence as to whether his master had been present at a treasonable meeting at the Brig of Turk. He swore positively that he had not. In reply to the remonstrances from his friends when he came out for this manifest perjury, he said, "I had rather trust my soul in God Almighty's hands than my master's head in the hands of those rascals."

"Adolphe Monod, had he lived and gone forward, would have grown out of the sphere of his admirers, as, in fact, did Vinet. Vinet could count those who wholly sympathised with him on his five fingers. His views were distorted by the temporary controversy on the relations of Church and State; but he was constantly going forward. He had a fine power of writing." "Gaussen was excellent, though narrow."

He had a deep sense of the horror of human wickedness, of the sinfulness of sin—the more remarkable from his fixed belief of the all-absorbing mercy of God and the final restoration of man. It was impossible to continue the conversation if it would take at all a light tone in speaking of some base or dishonourable act, after the short, severe condemnation which filled his whole expression, both of language and countenance. And I seem still to hear the deep tones of his voice repeating the lines from *Macbeth*, as an illustration of the terrible judgment of conscience upon sin:—

> "Canst thou not minister to a mind diseased:
> Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow;
> Raze out the written troubles of the brain;
> And with some sweet oblivious antidote
> Cleanse the stuff'd bosom of that perilous stuff,
> Which weighs upon the heart?"

"What is Christianity? It is the belief in the inexhaustible love of God for man." "He came to seek that which is lost, *until He find it.*" "What is human existence? It is not probation, it is education. Every step we take upwards or downwards is a stepping-stone to something else." "What is the proper use of Religion? The sun was made to see by, not to look at." "What is the effect of Revelation to us? It is the disclosure to us of our true relations to God and to one another, as when an exile, after long years' absence, returns home, and sees faces which he does not recognise. But one in whom he can trust comes and says, 'This aged man is your father; this boy is your brother, who has done much for you; this child is your son.'"

These and such as these were amongst the sublime thoughts that sustained his soul in what at times might have seemed an almost entire isolation from all ecclesiastical ordinances, but what was, in fact, a communion with the inner spirit of all. Presbyterian by his paternal connection with the author of the *Institutes* and the minister of Greyfriars, Episcopalian by his maternal descent and by his early education, it came to pass that in later life, whilst still delighting in the occasional services and ministrations of the Episcopal Church, and enjoying to the last the tender care of an Episcopalian curate, he yet habitually frequented the worship and teaching of the National Church, both in country and in town—a living proof of the effacement of those boundary-lines which, before the

exasperations of our latter days, were to many of the best Episcopalians and Presbyterians almost as if they did not exist. In all the varying Scottish communions he had those who counted his friendship one of their chief privileges; and not only there, and in the hearts of loving friends in England, but far away with Catholic Frenchmen in Normandy, and in the bright religious society in which he had dwelt in former days by the distant shores of Geneva, his memory was long cherished, and will not pass away so long as any survive who had seen him face to face.

I have heard it said that once meeting a shepherd in the Highlands, he said to him, in that tone which combined in so peculiar a manner sweetness and command, and with that penetrating emphasis which drew out of every word that he used the whole depth of its meaning, 'Do you know the Father?' and that years afterwards, on those same hills, he encountered the same shepherd, who recognised him and said, 'I know the Father now.' The story, whether true or not, well illustrates the hold which the memory of that face and figure and speech had on all who ever came across it.

There are not a few to whom that attenuated form and furrowed visage seemed a more direct link with the unseen world than any other that had crossed their path in life. Always on the highest summits at once of intellectual cultivation and of religious speculation, he seemed to breathe the refined atmosphere

> "where the immortal shapes
> Of bright aërial spirits live insphered
> In regions mild, of calm and serene air,
> Above the smoke and stir of this dim spot
> Which men call Earth."[1]

[1] See *Lectures on the History of the Church of Scotland*, pp. 159-61.

CHAPTER XI.

Death of his two Sisters.

MR. ERSKINE was never married, but all, and more than all, that the sisters of Charles Lamb and Lord Macaulay were to their unmated brothers, his two sisters were to him. With a deeper meaning than was in the poet's words, he could have said of Mrs. Stirling what Wordsworth said of his dear sister Dorothy :—

> 'She gave me eyes, she gave me ears ;
> A heart, the fountain of sweet tears ;
> And love, and thought, and joy.'

After her short and childless married life, Mrs. Stirling returned to Linlathen to be more to him than ever. Of the outward things of life he took but little charge; they were left wholly in her hands. Gentle and gracious, but prudent and firm, unobtrusive and unimperious, she guided all, the guiding hand unfelt. More delicate than all ordinary domestic arrangements were her close and tender dealings with his deep and sensitive nature. In his more peculiar idiosyncrasies he needed sympathy from those nearest him. Such sympathy he got from her in measure so full that no want was ever felt, yet meted out so wisely as to be largely serviceable in preserving him from becoming too engrossed with the dominant idea of the time, or from carrying it too far. In this respect the understanding between them was as complete

as the attachment throughout was entire and unbroken. Her death was unexpected. In November 1866 her brother and she had removed from Linlathen to take up their quarters for the winter in Edinburgh, at No. 16 Charlotte Square. She was in her usual state of health till the end of the month, when the illness came upon her which in a few days proved fatal. In all her illnesses she had been especially fond of quiet, and she got it in her last. Early on the morning of the 1st December Mr. Erskine was called to her bed-side. Sick-nurse and good physician —their last offices rendered—retired. Brother and sister were left alone. "I like to feel you near," she said, as she took his hand, patted and held it. He felt its grasp relaxing. Then he took hers and held it till her gentle spirit passed quietly away. "A look of rest and peace remains on her dear face—a smile of complete satisfaction." [1] The sad event was announced on its occurrence by Mr. Erskine himself to two dear friends, and seldom has the character of a lost sister been more truthfully and vividly described, seldom has a death been more pathetically deplored, than in the letters which follow.

379. TO MRS. GURNEY.

16 CHARLOTTE SQUARE, *1st and 4th Dec.* 1866.

BELOVED EMILY,—It has pleased God to take my dear sister Christian to Himself. She died this morning after a week's illness, having been to me, for thirty years, my constant companion, my faithful, patient, loving friend, my mother, wife, sister, all in one. . . .

[1] From note written at the time by Mrs. Paterson to her uncle, Dr. M'Leod Campbell.

380. TO LADY AUGUSTA STANLEY.

CHARLOTTE SQUARE, 3*d Dec.* 1866.

BELOVED FRIEND,—Do you know what has come upon us? It has pleased God to take away my dearest sister Mrs. Stirling, who has now for thirty years been my chief earthly comfort and stay and guidance. You have known her, so you can in some degree appreciate my loss; she has been felt by all who have come near her to be the fitting depository of all sorrows and anxieties, because she had a heart always at leisure from itself, and so free to give a listening ear and a loving sympathy to every human being. I never heard her say an unkind word of any one, and I never saw her weary of doing good to any one whom she had once taken up, however undeserving.

I have found her the most trustworthy of friends and the most faithful and wisest of counsellors. I communicated everything that I heard or knew to her—as one always sure to help me to a right judgment on it. And now that place is empty—on which I used to lean so confidentially. It is empty, but God is behind that empty place, and I believe that He would teach me, by making it empty, to find Himself more really than I have ever done. All her patient love and ready sympathy flowed out of Him as their living Fountain, and He shows us the streams to guide us up to the Fountain. I know that I may trust Him fully—that He will never leave, never forsake—and yet I feel a desolateness unutterable. I have many friends; but none could fill her place. She had no crotchet, nor caprice, nor vanity. She never either spoke or acted for effect—all was love, and truth, and duty. Beloved and blessed friend, you will feel with me.—Yours most affectionately, T. ERSKINE.

My loving regards to the Dean.

An announcement similar to these was sent to Mr. Carlyle, from whom promptly came the following note, one of the first that Mr. Erskine received, and one of the most affectionate :—

MR. CARLYLE TO MR. ERSKINE.

CHELSEA, *5th Dec.* 1866.

OH my dear Mr. Erskine, what a boundless disaster has befallen you;—I know it too well! The one that was your own in this world is lost. The gentle, wise, and beautiful soul, who had lovingly attended you, and been your fellow-pilgrim and guardian spirit for so many years, is gone to her rest, and, in this world, can be with you no more.

I know well enough how vain are human words of comfort, nor will importune you with any such: you will go for some solacement where you know it is to be found; and time and meditation will abate the poignancy of what is at first so harsh and so strange. God is above us; *she* is with God, even as we are: what more can we say? If in the bitterness of your grief you sometimes reflect, "I am suffering this in her stead; had I gone first, it must have been she," you may find that a momentary encouragement, if only a momentary.

I write no more, dear Mr. Erskine; but I understand well how sad is your heart, and my sympathy with you, could it do the least good, is painfully true. God be with you, dear friend.—I am ever affectionately yours,

T. CARLYLE.

381. TO M. CRAMER MALLET.

16 CHARLOTTE SQUARE, EDINR., *18th Dec.* 1866.

CHER AMI,—Mdlle. Clémentine aura la bonté de vous traduire la lettre suivante. It has pleased God to take to

Himself my dear sister Mrs. Stirling, who has all her life long been to me a loving friend, and for the last thirty years has been my companion and fellow-pilgrim—the light of my house, and the wise and sympathising arranger of my material life, as well as the gentle helper of my spiritual interests. It is impossible to exaggerate the loss that I have sustained; at the same time I feel that my sorrow is very selfish, for the gain to her has been I am sure unspeakable. I cannot expect to survive her long, being now seventy-eight years of age; but I know that not an hour of that time, whether it be longer or shorter, can pass without my feeling my need of her who has so long been my reminder and my adviser. I often feel that by this dispensation God would teach me to know that He who gave the gift is better than the gift, and that all the confidence which I placed in *her* may with still more assurance be placed in Him. If we can trust ourselves in the hand of a fellow-creature with undoubting confidence, surely we do wrong to God, if we do not lie with still more confidence in His hands. She was a living member of Jesus Christ, witnessing in her whole life that same love of which He is the fountain. Tell this to your brother Ernest, that I may have his sympathy as well as yours. Pray, do not discontinue to write to me. Your letters are always interesting to me, and used to interest her very much. I value your friendship exceedingly, remembering also the love of your dear parents.—Ever affectionately yours, T. ERSKINE.

382. TO THE REV. J. M'LEOD CAMPBELL.

16 CHARLOTTE SQUARE, 1*st Jan.* 1867.

DEAR MR. CAMPBELL,—I enter upon a new year with a feeling of loneliness, such as none can know but those who

have known and lost such a friend as my dear sister has been to me during my long life, and more especially during the last thirty years that we have passed together in closest intercourse. She has been to me a continual stay, and support, and witness for God, by her unwavering fidelity, and loving wisdom, and diligence in all duties.

If I could so trust her as I have trusted her, is it not doing our Father great wrong, if I do not absolutely and entirely trust Him?

This has been the special form of the witness which she has borne of God to the hearts of many—for she has been a much-trusted woman; people of all characters have felt that they might trust her, that she was at leisure from herself to attend to them and their griefs or interests with her whole heart.

I feel that my grief is for myself and for her surviving friends, and that she must now be nearer the fountain of love. "Having loved His own that were in the world, He loved them unto the end." Love to your household. —Ever affectionately yours, T. ERSKINE.

383. REV. THOMAS WRIGHT MATHEWS.

16 CHARLOTTE SQUARE, 30*th Jan.* 1867.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—It seems to me so strange that I should have been suffering under such a sorrow for two months, and you should not have divined it. My beloved sister Mrs. Stirling died on the 1st December, leaving me a widower and an orphan. It is an overwhelming event, breaking up my whole material life, for she had been God's minister towards me in all its concerns and arrangements, as well as taking from me the most patient, the most reasonable, and the most unselfish of friends that ever man had amongst his fellow-creatures. My thought has, however, always, even from the first, been that God is better than

His gifts. . . . Nevertheless I am sometimes very desolate. My love to your dear wife. Mrs. Paterson is very far from well. It may not be long before she is also called, and I am myself seventy-eight years of age.—Yours ever truly,

T. ERSKINE.

Mrs. Paterson was living at Morningside near Edinburgh at the time of her sister's death. Broken health, requiring change of climate, and family ties requiring separate residence, had hindered her from being so much with her brother as her elder sister. But still the intercourse was close and the communion perfect. As thoroughly at one with him in all the favourite ideas as her sister, there was a liveliness, a buoyancy, a force in her sympathy, as compared with that of her more placid-minded sister, which if it might have carried him farther on, would have lifted him higher up. He delighted in the youthfulness of spirit present in her to the close. That close was near at hand. She scarcely ever left her room after Mrs. Stirling's death. Two months afterwards she became suddenly worse. "A joy and brightness indescribable shone in her face and was heard in her voice as at the close of a week's illness the doctor said that she was not likely to live another day. "Say that again," she said. "Did he say—to-night—that I shall see my God? Oh joy, joy!" The joy remained through all her suffering. She spoke of all whom she was so soon to meet, of all whom she left behind, passing every friend in review with a tender word of farewell for each. The favourite idea with her during that closing week was that it was *all one life*—the life here on earth, the life there in Heaven. In an interval of comparative relief, on the closing day, her eldest grandchild was brought to her. She took the child's hand in her own, and said, "Darling Mary, this is not the end of life, but the beginning

of an endless life; I am now going to this life in heaven, but it is all one life. The life of Christ on earth—a daily dying to self, a daily dying to self—that is to be your life, my darling child." To another younger grandchild she said, "My darling, God does wish you to be so good; God does not only say, 'Boysie, you must not do this,' 'Boysie, you dare not do that,' but 'My child, take My hand and walk with Me.' And He will lead you in the paths of pleasantness, and you must not walk in them alone, you must take your brother with you." His father (her son) lifted the little boy up and she kissed him. With grave and wondering look the child was borne away, and after one burst of grief he said to his eldest sister, "I am happy, for granny is so very happy."

Her brother, who had called twice daily, now came in to her. "Tom, Tom," she said, "I shall not long speak to you. Listen to God. The Brandon Street life has been an open book before me these two days.[1] The life there, the same always—eternal life. . . . Beloved Mr. Campbell, beloved Mr. Campbell. . . . To-night I shall see our elder brother; yes, I shall see our dearest James—but it is Jesus I mean. Yes, I shall see him to-night, and know Him for my very own Elder Brother. Oh wonderful! oh joy, joy! . . . Rest, did you not hear that? it was so clear. Light, did you not see that? no, you could not. . . . Hush, hush! He is near." Gently, very gently, she passed away.

384. TO LADY AUGUSTA STANLEY.

16 CHARLOTTE SQUARE, 27*th March* 1867.

BELOVED ONE,—You will sorrow with me in this sorrow as few can, for you had received much of her love, and

[1] Brandon Street, where Mr. M'Leod Campbell used frequently to stay with the Miss Patersons, and where Captain and Mrs. Paterson used to meet him.

knew its truth and sweetness and holiness, and you had returned her love, as a loving, trustful child. It is a call upward to all who knew her, for such love as hers is rarely seen on this earth. I almost remember her birth, and she has always appeared to me as a child—so young and fresh and simple in all her ways. I am glad the Dean knew her, for he will be able to understand what you may feel and say about her.

All things seem changing, but God remains a faithful Creator, absolutely to be depended on. "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." And whatever of earthly love we hold in Him will always remain imperishable. These two sisters of mine are withdrawn from my sight, but the places which they occupied are not empty; God is there, and if I find them empty, it is because my spiritual perception does not discover Him there. This is the lesson which I have to learn hour by hour. I hope you sometimes see dear Katherine, Mrs. Erskine, who is now my nearest earthly tie, and who, I hear, is very delicate, and feeling herself tottering.

My hour, as well as hers, cannot be distant. What a curious effect the noise and boisterousness of political life have in the presence of the deep silence of eternal things! —Ever with true love yours, T. ERSKINE.

385. TO M. CRAMER MALLET.

16 CHARLOTTE SQUARE, 27*th March* 1867.

CHER ET ANCIEN AMI, FILS DES AMIS CHÉRIS,—Mdlle. Clémentine aura la bonté de vous traduire cette lettre, qu'il me faut écrire en Anglais, car je suis trop accablé pour m'arranger faire une leçon française.

My beloved sister Mrs. Paterson has not been long of following her elder sister. I saw her breathe her last on

Saturday night, the 23d March, and now I remain the only survivor of my family. These two sisters have been good and precious gifts to me, for which I desire to be most thankful to my heavenly Father. They have been most helpful to me, by enabling me to realise that I live encompassed by an ever-loving presence and care of God. They have been streams out of that infinite Fountain, bearing witness to its unfailing fulness. Her symptoms did not alarm her family till within a very few days of the end; but she had herself felt the approach of death, and longed for it, as the entrance into near communion with her Father and her Saviour.

I never knew any one who had more spiritual enjoyment than she for many years, and she had that frank and open nature that allowed her to utter what she felt. It would be most ungrateful to God, and most unkind to them, to grudge them their deliverance from the burden of life, and their entrance into the fuller joy of their Lord; but their departure has made the world very empty to me. I believe that my Father's purpose to me in all this is to make me know and feel more than I have ever done that He is Himself my rest, and joy, and dwelling-place. My affectionate regards to your sisters-in-law, and daughters, and Ernest.—Dear friend, very truly yours,

T. ERSKINE.

Mr. Carlyle, as before, hastened with words of sympathy:—

MR. CARLYLE TO MR. ERSKINE.

CHELSEA, 1*st April* 1867.

DEAR MR. ERSKINE,—Your mournful tidings, not unanticipated, were abundantly sad to us here; and have

been painfully present ever since, though till now I have written nothing. Alas! what can writing do in such a case? The inexorable stroke has fallen; the sore heart has to carry on its own unfathomable dialogue with the Eternities and their gloomy Fact; all speech in it, from the friendliest sympathiser, is apt to be vain, or worse. Under your quiet words in that little note, there is legible to me a depth of violent grief and bereavement, which seems to enjoin silence rather. We knew the beautiful soul that has departed, the love that had united you and Her from the beginnings of existence,—and how desolate and sad the scene now is for him who is left solitary. Ah me! ah me!

Yesterday gone a twelvemonth (31 March 1866, *Saturday* by the day of the week) was the day I arrived at your door in Edinburgh, and was met by that friendliest of Hostesses and you; three days before, I had left at the door of this room one dearer and kinder than all the earth to me, whom I was not to behold again: what a change for you since then, what a change for me! Change *after* change following upon both of us,—upon you especially!

It is the saddest feature of old age, that the old man has to see himself daily grow more lonely; reduced to commune with the inarticulate Eternities, and the Loved Ones now unresponsive who have preceded him thither. Well, well; there is a blessedness in this too, if we take it well. There is a grandeur in it, if also an *extent* of sombre sadness, which is new to one; nor is hope quite wanting, —nor the clear conviction that those whom *we* would most screen from sore pain and misery are now safe and at rest. It lifts one to real kingship withal, *real* for the first time in this scene of things. Courage, my friend; let us endure patiently and act piously, to the end.

Shakespeare sings pathetically somewhere :—

> "Fear no more the heat of the sun,
> Nor the furious winter's rages;
> *Thou* thy weary task hast done,
> Home hast gone, and ta'en thy wages;"

—inexpugnable and well art *thou!* These tones go tinkling through me, sometimes, like the pious chime of far-off church bells.

Adieu, my friend. I must come to Scotland again at least once, if I live; and while you are there it is not quite a solitary country to me.—Yours ever truly,

T. CARLYLE.

386. TO MR. CARLYLE.

16 CHARLOTTE SQUARE, *5th April* 1867.

DEAR MR. CARLYLE,—Your good and kind words are always very welcome and helpful. A purpose of goodness and kindness at the foundation of all things, and ordering all things, is the only rest for the soul of man amidst the agitations of time, and every loving voice that reaches me bears its testimony to the existence of such a purpose, and its great Purposer. Yes, what changes have come upon both of us since that 31st of March last year, darkening our whole horizon! Still let us be comforted by the assurance that there is no accident in them, and that indeed that wise and loving purpose underlies them all, and, when truly entered into and understood, gives them a satisfying interpretation.

The complete separation which death makes is indeed wonderful—we must walk by faith and hope, or else lie down and die. I have great pleasure in reading the Psalms, and I endeavour to persevere in the same kind of work

which has long occupied and interested me, and thus I keep afloat. Your recognition of me as one of the ties still drawing you to Scotland is very gratifying. My kind regards to the Doctor,[1] whose letter I have this morning received.—Yours affectionately, T. ERSKINE.

[1] Mr. Carlyle's brother.

CHAPTER XII.

Letters of 1867-68-69.

AFTER Mrs. Paterson's death, at Mr. Erskine's desire her son with his family took up their permanent residence at Linlathen. He joined them there in the autumn of 1867. The sense of utter bereavement never left him, but very touching was the simplicity and grateful tenderness with which he met the unremitting attentions of every member of the new household and the sympathy of old friends who came to visit him in his sorrow. He kept up as he was able his old habit of going about among the cottages of the poor, and no sympathy was more welcome to him than that which came to him from those who mourned with him over a common loss. It pleases us to notice that there was another healing influence from which his deep grief did not shut him out, to which he was as open as he had ever been. On the 19th September he writes to a friend:—

387. TO MISS WEDGWOOD.

LINLATHEN, *19th Sept.* 1867.

. . . I HAVE been paying a visit to Miss Dundas at Perth for the last week, and have been making acquaintance with a most beautiful country, which has always been within my reach, but has never been really understood and felt by me till on this occasion. The

river Tay at Perth and above it is a glorious thing. It is just of a right size, quite graspable, but deep and strong and living, rapid and yet unbroken. Like the Rhone and the Rhine, it comes out of a lake, quite pure and full-grown. I think it more companionable than these are, because not so large. When you come again you must try to get acquainted with him. I have been also seeking deeper and more intimate acquaintance with the Creator of all things, with my Creator, whose hands have made me and fashioned me, and whose continual care of me is necessary to my existence. My spiritual life, I am sure, must consist in love, and there can be no other ever present, ever embracing love but His.—Ever affectionately yours,

T. ERSKINE.

Within doors at Linlathen much of his time was given to that work upon which now more than ever he was bent, but which increasing infirmities rendered him less and less capable of accomplishing as he desired. A pleasing break came in the arrival of a literary package from Mr. Maurice, which was thus acknowledged :—

388. TO MR. MAURICE.

LINLATHEN, DUNDEE, 28*th Oct.* 1867.

DEAR FRIEND,—I thank you for your kind gifts. I always find instruction in your thoughts. Our ordinary theology has been drawn chiefly from the Epistles, and often seems almost to overlook the personal teaching of Christ. I have heard a very intelligent professor say, that the Sermon on the Mount distinctly taught justification by works, in opposition to the Pauline doctrine. I conceive that any one who has such an idea must misunderstand both of his authorities.

By faith, Paul certainly means filial trust (the faith of

Jesus—the faith which Jesus [the Son of God] had: thus assuming that we are also His children, else we could not be called to have that faith). And assuredly our Lord rests the whole of His teaching on the fatherly relation of God to us. "That ye may be the children of your Father." He is already your Father, but He desires that you should be His worthy children.

I have been struck lately by the communication which God made to Moses at the Burning Bush. "I AM"—the personal presence and address of God. No new truth concerning the character of God is given; but Moses had met God Himself, and was thus strengthened to meet Pharaoh. There is an immense interval between "He" and "I"—between hearing about God and hearing God. What an interval!

I wish that you had a church in Cambridge as well as a chair—they might complete each other. I felt a need to apologise for my last letter, and I feel a similar need now. —Ever affectionately yours, T. ERSKINE.

The winter of 1867-68 was again spent in Edinburgh. A visit from Mr. Maurice was doubly prized as having been volunteered. On both sides it was fully appreciated.

MR. MAURICE TO MR. ERSKINE.

3 ST. PETER'S TERRACE, CAMBRIDGE, 13*th Jan.* 1868.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I do indeed look back with much wonder and thankfulness to the intercourse with you which inaugurated the beginning of this year for me. There is so much in the interchange of convictions, even if one received nothing fresh; but you gave me what was the quickening of thought and life that had been in me doubtless, but that were not clearly and consciously in me, so that I

felt you to be truly an instrument of the Spirit doing and fulfilling His work. I have especially recurred to all you said about faith. It seems to me that all my teaching here ought to be affected by it. I cannot help fearing that we have been trying to build social life and personal life upon distrust and suspicion of each other, and of God; and that the human ἦθος is as you said that of trust; the man, the divine man, being the truster Himself, and the source of trust in all the race. I quite feel with you that Christ's trust in the Father is the sign and witness of His divine nature, that which corresponds to and shows forth the righteousness of God, that which is the form of righteousness for man. And I cannot doubt that in Him God has justified the trust of every man, Jew and Gentile, since the foundation of the world, and pronounced sentence on all the distrust and self-exaltation of every Jew and Gentile. All polities and societies grew up, I conceive, through the trust of men in each other, and through trust in some one whom they could not see and could not hear, but who, they felt, was not far from any one of them. And as clearly and obviously all polities and societies perished through distrust of the members in each other, and through distrust of their Father in heaven, through the establishment of some dark power to be dreaded and hated, not trusted, in His place. The revelation of the Father by the Son, as well as of the Son by the Father, was in truth that which men in all different ways, in their social acts and theories, as much as what would be called the religious acts and theories, had been showing that they needed. Christ came in the fulness of the time to bring to light the mystery that had been about all ages and generations, though hidden from all. And in all ages since, the trust of men in every work they have engaged in, as thinkers, discoverers, martyrs, has had no other root than that faith of Jesus Christ, that confidence

of Him in His Father which sustained Him in life and death, and to which He appealed in every leper, and blind, and palsied man, as well as in every one whom He raised from the dead. That I understood to be your meaning, and my conscience thoroughly responded to it.

I wish I had read more of your book and talked more about it with you. That part I read interested me deeply. And, I think, when you come to the third chapter of which you speak, you will be able to show how much its sense has been perverted by the efforts to make out a charge of universal depravity from it as the reason for the necessity of faith, whereas if I read him aright he is teaching us that the Psalmist found among the Jews of his age—those Jews who were in the covenant, and had every call to exercise faith,—an utter want of it, and therefore great moral corruption. "What the law speaks, it speaks to those who are under the law." The Jew is proved to have no better standing ground, in himself, or in his national privileges, than another man, that he and all might know that they have a standing ground in God's righteousness—that no trust in that can be wrong or can fail. All are concluded under sin, and proved to be sinners in themselves, that they might be all righteous in God, that they might, Gentiles as well as Jews, believe that Christ had manifested *that* for their justification. Justification by faith is surely a most wholesome and comfortable doctrine, when it means faith in a Justifier, in one who is righteous and who makes righteous. But is it not a pestilent doctrine if it means that we are justified by faith in our difference from those who are not justified? That is the very faith which St. Paul is beating to pieces as the essential unbelief.

F. D. MAURICE.

389. TO MR. MAURICE.

2 FORRES STREET, 16 *Jan.* 1868.

DEAR FRIEND,—The remembrance of your visit is most precious to me, helping me better to realise the love of Him who put the thought of it into your heart. I hope you have not suffered by it, and that Mrs. Maurice has not been made over-anxious by the thought of the two long night journeys. I have been regretting that I had not communicated more with you on the subject of my notes on the Epistle to the Romans. I sometimes feel that I shall never succeed in putting them into a shape that will make them useful to others.

The subjective form of the gospel as set forth in the letter—that is, the setting forth of Christ as the ἀρχηγὸς τῆς πίστεως, as well as the revealer of the Father's trustworthiness—is very much lost in our translation, and has been much overlooked by any commentators that I have seen, just as the invitation to the weary and heavy-laden, in the conclusion of the 11th chapter of Matthew, has been. But there are great difficulties, especially in the latter part of the 3d chapter. I think that I ought to have got light from you on some of these points. Give my warmest thanks to dear Mrs. Maurice for her wish that you should come, and my affectionate regards to your sisters, and believe me to remain gratefully and lovingly yours,

T. ERSKINE.

The "dark hollow of the year" was cheered by this letter from Mr. Carlyle:—

MR. CARLYLE TO MR. ERSKINE.

CHELSEA, 23*d January* 1868.

DEAR MR. ERSKINE,—The sight of your handwriting is itself welcome and cheering to me at all times. And I owe

you many thanks this time for that pious little visit you have made to Greenend and poor Betty.[1] Often had I thought of asking you to do such a thing for me by some opportunity, but, in the new sad circumstances, never had the face. Now that the ice is broken, let me hope you will from time to time continue, and on the whole, keep yourself and me in some kind of mutual visibility with poor Betty, so long as we are all spared to continue here. The world has not many shrines to a devout man at present, and perhaps in our own section of it there are few objects holding more authentically of Heaven and an unseen "better world" than the pious loving soul and patient heavy-laden life of this poor old venerable woman. The love of human creatures one to another, where it is true and unchangeable, often strikes me as a strange fact in their poor history, a kind of perpetual Gospel, revealing itself in them; sad, solemn, beautiful, the heart and mother of all that can, in any way, ennoble their otherwise mean and contemptible existence in this world.

I am very idle here, very solitary, which I find to be oftenest less miserable to me than the common society that offers. Excepting Froude almost alone, whom I see once a week, there is hardly anybody whose talk, always polite, clear, sharp, and sincere, does me any considerable good. He has an excellent article in the last *Fraser's Magazine*, on "Protestantism," which I think you, if you have not already read it, would read with sympathy.

It is a great evil to me that now I have no work, none worth calling by the name; that I am too weak, too languid, too sad of heart, to be fit for any work, in fact to care sufficiently for any object left me in the world, to think of grappling round it and coercing it by work. A most sorry dog-kennel it oftenest all seems to me, and wise words, if

[1] Mrs. Braid, referred to in page 113.

one even had them, to be only thrown away on it. Basta-basta, I for most part say of it, and look with longings towards the still country where at last we and our loved ones shall be together again. Amen, amen.

A sister of mine is with me here for these two months, to help us through the dark hollow of the year; it is the one you saw in Edinburgh, as she right well remembers, I can see. Lady Ashburton is again in Mentone with her child. Adieu, dear friend.—Yours ever,

T. CARLYLE.

The close of February brought another friend to Mr. Erskine's side, who gives this notice of their intercourse:—

REV. J. M'LEOD CAMPBELL TO MRS. MACNABB.

LAUREL BANK, *4th March* 1868.

. . . MR. ERSKINE was better than I expected to find him; and, as usual, I felt more fellowship with him in what seems to be his life, and what I desire may more and more be my own life, than I ever feel with any other man. This notwithstanding of differences in our understanding of many passages of Scripture, and even in our thoughts: —his tendency to reduce many aspects of truth to one making him hesitate to see now the importance, not to say the correctness, of what he once urged; making him, indeed, appear to give up what he once held. I do not believe that his views have at all changed as they appear to himself to have done; and I have urged him to have his old books read to him, in the expectation that he may receive from his former self, so to speak, strictures upon what he now dwells exclusively on, that he cannot easily receive from another. This, however, I say with no reference to that great distinguishing element in his thoughts, viz., his expectation as to "the restitution of all

things" which had a place in him before I knew him: although occupation with the present gospel of remission of sins through the death of Christ for all men, did, in the Row days, and for a considerable time, seem to engross him and be all the gospel he needed. Now he feels that to be but the first element in the gospel, and the hope, into which he sees it expanding, he feels essential to its being to him gospel indeed; while he further sees what is to him implied in the love of God to man manifest in the death of Christ, not only as so implied, but as actually taught by St. Paul, and what we must see in the Epistle to the Romans, if we understand it. Whether he will ever satisfy himself with the adequacy of his own bringing out of the apostle's teaching in the Epistle to the Romans so as to publish it, I know not, but he still labours at this work.[1]

Before the first anniversary of Mrs. Paterson's death came round another of the old Linlathen circle died in London,—his brother's widow. On the 4th March he had written to her:—

390. TO MRS. ERSKINE.

2 FORBES STREET, *4th March* 1868.

BELOVED KATHERINE,—I am afraid from your continued silence that you, at least, feel disinclined to make any exertion, which indicates weakness, if nothing more. I wish to let you know, however, that I do not cease to think of you, in connection with the past and the future, with memory and hope. I was thinking of your dear mother this morning, and her ready sympathy with any spiritual thought or feeling, and her preparedness for the blessedness of the communion of saints. We can conceive her joy as she advances in acquaintance with the unsearchable riches of

[1] The result of these labours was published after Mr. Erskine's death in the volume entitled *The Spiritual Order*. See Appendix No. IV.

Christ, and with the love of God which passeth knowledge. There is a great company, continually increasing, of those who follow the Lamb wheresoever He goeth, from all nations and kindreds, and ours are with them. Since I last wrote to you I have had a visit from dear Maurice, who is most affectionate, and Mrs. Schwabe, and Mr. Campbell, who was with me for a week—a very precious man, a man of much prayer.

I find human kindness a great help to realising the love of God. 'If ye being evil can thus love, how much more will your Father who is perfect in goodness?'

Give my love to any friends whom you may see.—Ever affectionately yours, T. ERSKINE.

Do you sleep tolerably?

Before this letter reached her, Mrs. Erskine had joined the company to which it alludes. "I have not seen much of her lately," Mr. Erskine wrote to one friend, "but she was one of the same class and school as my sisters, and she was faithful in her relations to God and man. She has 'brought up children,' which is one of the special duties of a widow, and she evidently lived much in the presence of God. Her death, though looked forward to by herself as an event which could not be distant, yet was sudden at the last. She appeared as well as usual on Sunday, and she was dead on Wednesday at 5 P.M. She knew the hand that held her, and felt herself safe in it. The young family that she has been guiding so long will miss her much. Indeed, all who knew her will miss her as a witness for God and a helper of their faith.—Yours, etc., T. ERSKINE."

And to another:—"She was an admirable woman, faithful and diligent in all duties, and unwearied in her

efforts to help those who needed her help. I believe also that she was scrupulously conscientious in her own inner walk with God, seeking to bring every thought under subjection to His will, to His love; and she had learned to love."

Equally with Mr. Erskine, Dr. Campbell felt this loss. "Dear Mrs. Erskine," we find him saying in a letter to his beloved friend, "her removal is to me one of those emptyings of the visible, the sense of which always affects me when friends are taken away who have been of that Church within the Church to which, notwithstanding of my conscious catholicity, I have found myself practically shut in. As a question of real communion there are circles within circles; and dear Mrs. Erskine, while holding fast her confidence in my love to Christ, and my love to the souls of men, was unable to meet me where Mrs. Paterson would have met me, and Miss Paterson also: but her confidence in me bore fruits of kindness to me, the remembrance of which I treasure, and will ever treasure, not merely with gratitude but also as fruits of love to God and to righteousness. Very high esteem blended with the deep sense of her kindness, which it could not but do, seeing how naturally she cared for others. To you, dear friend, she was a part of the past in a very different way: and her removal will renew and deepen your feeling of being alone, though in itself a less loss than those to which it is added."

Of Mr. Erskine's daily drives in the course of this winter one singular memorial has been preserved in a letter to Miss Wedgwood, dated 19th March:—

391. TO MISS WEDGWOOD.

2 FORBES STREET, 19*th March* 1868.

FIGLIA MIA,—. . . In my drives I generally go out towards the west, and of course return with my face towards the east. During the winter I was attracted and interested by the frequent recurrence of the same natural phenomenon. The moon rose a little before the sun set, and had just the appearance of a thin bit of fleecy cloud, like a great many others, for in the hazy atmosphere its outline was not at all distinct. I was not looking out for the moon, and so it was often a good while before I identified it as the moon. I saw it simply as a bit of cloud floating about along with many others of a like tissue and even a like form. At last it gradually distinguished itself from the rest by having always the same shape and the same place. It got occasionally covered over or merged in the other fleecy things; but still it never failed to reassert its own individuality. It was evidently a permanent thing amongst changeable things,—an objective thing amongst subjective things, shall I say? For I felt that these clouds were exhalations from myself (I being the earth), suggestions of my own mind, continually liable to change through the modifications which they suffered from other thoughts; they were all decidedly subjective. At the same time they bore witness not unfrequently to the existence of an objective, just as the clouds bear witness to the existence of the sun by the glory which they receive from him. But I wanted and needed to have the consciousness of the actual presence of the great Objective in me,—not thoughts about Him, but Himself, or at least something which I was sure did not depend upon myself, but would always assert its own distinct independent reality, and which could not possibly be

my own imagination, having this personal power and life in it, unmistakeably.

I don't like to go on with this, but I should like to finish it *viva voce* with you. The faculty of blundering grows upon me.—Your ever loving, T. ERSKINE.

When you see Mrs. Rich, embrace her for me. She has known most of those whom I have chiefly loved in this world, and that is itself an immense boon. I hope to write to her and to Mrs. Batten and to Emily soon.

Give my loving regards to your own mother.

The idea so picturesquely presented here was put into a kindred shape in a letter addressed a month afterwards

392. TO BISHOP EWING.

2 FORRES STREET, 16*th April.*

. . . THE revelation is both objective and subjective. Christ was the objective revelation of the Father; but we need the subjective revelation, which consists not in taking a veil off the Father, but in removing the scales from our own eyes. Perhaps the objective revelation is contained in the subjective. To them who are without, who are living in the flesh, all things must necessarily be in parables.

I sympathise, however, very much with the writer's demand for a complete objectivity in God. The shadow within me must always keep its character of shadow, leading me to look outwards for the substance. I desire to know God as really (and far more) as I know a man. It is not merely by any thoughts of Him that I am to be comforted and strengthened (though I expect and find comfort and strength from such thoughts); I desire and expect an actual putting forth of His own hand, a direct breathing of His own love upon me. It is said in Deuteronomy that Moses died by the word of the Lord. The Hebrew for *word* also

means *mouth*, and hence also *kiss;* so the Jewish tradition is that Moses died by the kiss of God. This is something more than knowing God is love; and I should like to receive all the sorrows and pains of life, as it were, by the kiss of God.

My dear Bishop, I have done you little service by this letter;[1] but receive it lovingly, as from a friend who loves you—a friend who would pray and hope before long to die by the kiss of God.

Affectionate regards to Lady Alice. T. ERSKINE.

It was to the same correspondent that Mr. Erskine at this time wrote:—

393. TO BISHOP EWING.

I LOOK with great sadness on the fading away in so many minds of the Christianity of our childhood. Take the great mass of minds in whom it is fading, can we in any sense say that it is like the vanishing of narrow Judaism before the early dawn of the gospel?—the phase which St. Paul saw and has so vividly pictured to us. It seems to me we are more and more coming to this issue—Has God revealed Himself to us as one whose "ways are not as our ways, nor His thoughts as our thoughts"? or, Do we evolve out of our own inward light the existence of One who personifies our own highest conceptions of moral good?

For my own part, I am deeply thankful to the Calvinian atmosphere one has insensibly breathed from childhood for predisposing the mind in favour of the first, although by its unscriptural excesses unhappily contributing to the spreading reaction in favour of the latter, T. ERSKINE.

[1] A greater service had already been rendered. Writing to Mr. Erskine seven years before this time, Bishop Ewing says:—"I owe you more, dear sir, than to any man alive. I owe you belief in God,—in God as my and our true Friend and Father."—*Memoirs*, p. 327.

394. TO BISHOP EWING.

2 FORRES STREET, EDINBURGH, *May* 26, 1868.

MR. CAMPBELL came here yesterday to attend a great dinner given to Dr. Wylie of Carluke, on the fiftieth anniversary of his ministerial appointment to that parish. I went with Mr. Campbell, and Mr. Story of Roseneath was the proposer of a toast, in which Mr. Campbell's name and mine were joined, and received honourable treatment from the proposer, who is a very able man, and who seems very anxious to make the Church of Scotland understand the sin and blunder she committed in regard to Mr. Campbell thirty-eight years ago. It would be a right thing for her to rescind her act of deposition even now, if she really sinned in passing that act. Dr. Norman Macleod was expected at the dinner, but he did not come. His brother was there, whom I like very much.

All that class of men condemn the deposition of Mr. Campbell. And yet I believe that neither in the Church of Scotland nor in the Church of England is the root of the question then agitated understood to this day.

Is a man to become a child of God, or is a man a child of God in virtue of his being a man? What is the meaning of the name of God proclaimed to Moses?—"The Lord God, merciful and gracious, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin, without clearing the guilty." An inexhaustible love which punishes, because the purposes of love can no otherwise be accomplished. A love which eternally desires our sympathy because such sympathy must be our holiness and blessedness, is the nature of God, and the explanation of all His dealings with us.—Ever yours,

T. ERSKINE.

395. TO THE SAME.

LINLATHEN, *July 16th.*

MR. CAMPBELL has shown me your prospectus, where my name has a position which I can by no means acquiesce in. It is really of no consequence to the reading public what I think on the subject of theology. Most thoroughly do I sympathise with your desire to put out the false and bring in the true, in all regions of thought, and especially in the highest. I also feel with you, that one of the first steps in this direction is to help men to see the true place of rationalism, and the true meaning of revelation. But I am sure that the introduction of my name, as you introduce it in that prospectus, would be a weakness and not a strength to you. I wish to keep my own place, which I feel ought to be a very subordinate place. It is a very difficult thing to help people by suggesting thoughts, and really to be a teacher and expositor of truth, at a moment like this, when all barriers are removed and new lines seem to be demanded. We must, however, adhere to the old; we must adhere to the gospel of Christ; endeavouring, however, to clear it of all false interpretations. Pray wait.—Yours affectionately, T. ERSKINE.

One of the earliest letters of 1869 was addressed to Mr. Carlyle, from whom came the following remarkable reply:—

MR. CARLYLE TO MR. ERSKINE.

CHELSEA, *12th Feb.* 1869.

DEAR MR. ERSKINE,—I was most agreeably surprised by the sight of your handwriting again, so kind, so welcome! The letters are as firm and honestly distinct as

ever;—the mind too, in spite of its frail *environments*, as clear, *plumb-up*, calmly expectant, as in the best days: right so; *so* be it with us all, till we quit this dim sojourn, now grown so lonely to us, and our change come! "Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name, Thy will be done;"—what else can we say? The other night, in my sleepless tossings about, which were growing more and more miserable, these words, that brief and grand Prayer, came strangely into my mind, with an altogether new emphasis; as if *written*, and shining for me in mild pure splendour, on the black bosom of the Night there; when I, as it were, *read* them word by word,—with a sudden check to my imperfect wanderings, with a sudden softness of composure which was much unexpected. Not for perhaps thirty or forty years had I once formally repeated that Prayer;—nay, I never felt before how intensely the voice of Man's soul it is; the inmost aspiration of all that is high and pious in poor Human Nature; right worthy to be recommended with an "After this manner pray ye."

I am very thankful that you went to see poor Betty;[1] she is one of the most venerable human figures now known to me in the world. I called there, the first thing after my bit of surgery in the neighbourhood, end of July last; I seemed to have only one other *visit* to make in all Scotland,—and I made only *one*. The sight of poor Betty, mournful as it is, and full of mournfullest memories to me, always does me good. So far as I could any way learn, she is well enough in her humble thrifty *economics*, etc.: if otherwise at any time, I believe you understand that help from this quarter would be a *sacred* duty to me.

I am still able to walk, though I do it on compulsion merely, and without pleasure except as in work *done*. It is a great sorrow that *you* now get fatigued so soon, and

have not your old privilege in this respect;—I only hope you perhaps do not quite so indispensably need it as I; with me it is the key to *sleep*, and in fact the one medicine (often ineffectual, and now gradually oftener) that I ever could discover for this poor clay tabernacle of mine. I still keep working, after a weak sort; but can now do little, often almost nothing;—all my little "work" is henceforth *private* (as I calculate); a setting of my poor house in order; which I would fain finish *in time*, and occasionally fear I shan't. Dear Mr. Erskine, good be ever with you. Were my hand *as little* shaky as it is to-day, I would write to you oftener. A word *from* you will ever be welcome here!—Yours sincerely and much, T. CARLYLE.

396. TO THOMAS CARLYLE, ESQ.

9 ALBYN PLACE, 19*th March* 1869.

DEAR MR. CARLYLE,—Since ever I received your last letter I have had a desire to thank you for it. I felt it to be a word in season, a word of comfort and hope, to which I was thankful to find myself able to respond. Assuredly it is a great deliverance from the bleak solitude of life, and from its weary turnings and tossings, to discover that we have ever within our reach One without whom not a sparrow falleth to the ground, to whom we can say "Our Father which art in heaven" with any assurance that He really regards us as His children, and has the purpose of training us into a participation of His own character, by all that path of life which He appoints for us. And I do indeed feel that the petitions with which the prayer commences express the deepest aspirations of man's being, the principles in which it would be his righteousness and blessedness to live. There seems as if there were a power in the very words to quiet the troubled spirit, and if we at all succeed

in realising the embracing presence of Him whom we call our Father, we cannot fail of finding ourselves helped and comforted and lifted up into a holier and purer atmosphere. —Dear Mr. Carlyle, yours with much regard,

T. ERSKINE.

397. TO MISS WEDGWOOD.

9 ALBYN PLACE, 13*th March* 1869.

WELL-BELOVED S.,—The sight of your handwriting is always agreeable to me, and it is more especially so at this time, coming as it does from Maurice's house. Your report of him, however, is not very satisfactory. I am afraid that he has actually worn himself out.

To my mind a thought is valuable in proportion to its capacity of becoming more precious the longer I know it. I always expect to understand his books better on a second reading, and to find out more of their secret—for every man has a secret, something which distinguishes him from every other human being. It is that critical character of your mind which demands novelty; it is like that taste which would require a different dinner every day in the year. I wish I had some book to read. I have been trying some of De Tocqueville, which makes me like the man very much.

I heard Keble's Life read, but I felt it waterish. The entire want of any theology provokes me. Give my loving regards to your host.—Ever affectionately yours,

T. ERSKINE.

We have had Jowett here lecturing[1] and preaching.

[1] He delivered two Lectures on Education before the Members of the Philosophical Institution.

398. TO MRS. MATHEWS.

9 ALBYN PLACE, EDINBURGH, 20*th March* 1869.

DEAR MRS. MATHEWS,—It seems very long since we have had any communication, yet no day passes without my thinking of you. Let me hear how you and your children are getting on in the journey of life. I am now past eighty, so that if you wish to have anything more to do with me in this world you must lose no time. I am very solitary now, as you may suppose, and a word from a friend, either spoken or written, is a cheerer to me. You are old friends now, of forty-six years' standing, I think, and connected in my memory with many things, and I expect a loving interest from you, and, indeed, I am sure that I possess it. I am sure that you do not forget me before God. He is our meeting-place and our very present help in time of need,—"Who forgiveth all our sins, and healeth all our diseases, who saveth our life from destruction, and crowneth us with loving-kindness and tender mercies." . . .—Ever affectionately yours, T. ERSKINE.

399. TO THE REV. J. M'LEOD CAMPBELL, D.D.

9 ALBYN PLACE, *5th April* 1869.

BELOVED FRIEND,—I have had much pleasure in reading the *Spectator's* review of your "Bread of Life," which will, doubtless, introduce it to the acquaintance of many, and I feel assured that very few works published in our day are fitted to give more help to their readers. I have had it read over to me in its new form, with increased satisfaction. I am particularly struck by the parallelism which you indicate between the mass and imputed righteousness in the respective places which they hold in the minds of Romanists and Calvinists. But I like it chiefly on account

of the help it gives to those who are desiring to feed on the bread which came down from heaven. That is what I desire for myself and my brethren, that thus we may be continually growing into a greater conformity to our Father's will, growing in filial trust and love and joy, for I believe in the truth of the word, "The joy of the Lord is your strength." I need this very much, and I desire to give God the glory of rejoicing in Him, and to be delivered from the weakness which the want of that joy produces. There is a great deal in the 119th Psalm which expresses either what I feel, or seek to feel. "Thou art my portion, O Lord," "Thy hands have made me and fashioned me; give me understanding, that I may learn Thy commandments." I know that He is very nigh me, and that He hath said, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." You do not forget me in your prayers. Give my love to . . . .—Ever affectionately yours, T. ERSKINE.

400. TO THE REV. J. M'LEOD CAMPBELL, D.D.

127 GEORGE STREET, 18*th May* 1869.

DEAR MR. CAMPBELL,—It is indeed most interesting to think that you are to spend your remaining days on the banks of the Gareloch, and specially on the Roseneath side, which still remains as a type of ideal beauty in my memory.

I wonder whether the Church of Scotland will not at last take the step of reponing you, when the Glasgow University confers the degree of D.D. on you, and you are invited as an honoured guest at the Moderator's dinner. Most of your prosecutors are either dead or in the Free Church, and the obligation of the Confession of Faith on the consciences of clergy as well as of laity is much relaxed. . . .

401. TO LADY AUGUSTA STANLEY.

127 GEORGE STREET, *15th June* 1869.

BELOVED LADY,—The remembrance of the reviving visit of you and the Dean is most pleasant to me, especially when connected with the hope of its repetition, before very long. I have sent you a photograph of Madame Vernet, which I think you will like as a Swiss pendant to Lady Christian Erskine, and as a discovery of the antecedents of Madame de Staël. She had the breadth of our Cardross friends in the higher cultivation and refinement, but without their humour, which, however was not missed in her. There are some people who seem complete without it, and she was one of them.

Tell the Dean that I have been hearing Bright's Speeches read with great interest and admiration. I wonder whether he is a man really and sincerely desirous of doing what is right, and whether the frequent introduction of such words as humanity and justice and Christianity indicates something real in his heart and conscience. I have thought this night a good deal about the House of Lords, and what course they may choose for themselves. They cannot throw out the Bill without doing harm, and I trust that even those of them who may see an abstract rightness in doing so will yet make allowance for the hardness of the hearts of the people.—Ever affectionately yours,

T. ERSKINE.

402. TO DEAN STANLEY.

127 GEORGE ST., EDINBURGH, *17th June* 1869.

MY DEAR DEAN,—I have been listening to the speech of the Bishop of Peterborough, and though my own mind had been to a considerable degree made up as to the general

rightness of the Bill, I yet could not refuse the consent both of my reason and conscience to much which he said. I do not believe that with the modifications which it is sure to undergo, before it becomes law, it will conciliate either the Catholic priesthood or laity, and there can be no doubt that the Protestants, to a man, must feel themselves aggrieved, and they would like that England should be taught to know how much she has owed to them in time past, and how she was now slighting those through whose faithful adherence she had the firmest hold of Ireland. There must be left some establishment and endowment, else in the rural districts, the support of the clergy being thrown on the landed proprietors, an inferior class of men would almost certainly be introduced, and lower the general standard both of Christian character and intelligence amongst the people. It is a very grave question, which must be considered not only in the *large*, but in all its *details*, in order to its being rightly judged. . . . Any man who meets this question simply as the member of a party ought to be hanged forthwith. . . .—Very truly yours,

T. ERSKINE.

403. TO MRS. MACHAR.

EDINBURGH, *August* 1869.

I AM thankful to be remembered by you, and I am thankful to be assured that our Father which is in heaven will remember us both with that love which He commends to us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us. I remember I.'s illness and death—a blessed time it was. Her conscience was completely purged, and her joy in God uninterrupted. My own experience has been very different. There was a deeper evil to overcome, a deeper selfishness, a deeper root of pride and self-seeking. And He to whom

belongeth mercy has rendered to me according to my needs. Dear friend, I can trust Him, and sometimes He enables me to know Him as an exceeding joy, but He never allows me to forget how perverse I have been, and how grievously I have sinned against Him.

I often feel very solitary, and often repeat to myself the verse, "When my father and mother forsake me the Lord taketh me up." I acknowledge His righteousness and His mercy in all His dealings with me. . . . —Yours, etc.,

T. ERSKINE.

PROFESSOR LORIMER TO DR. HANNA.

1 BRUNTSFIELD CRESCENT, 20*th Feb.* 1877.

MY DEAR DR. HANNA,—You ask me to tell you the particulars of the interesting meeting between Mr. Erskine and Monsieur Prévost-Paradol at which I had the privilege to be present, and I shall do so most willingly, so far as I can remember them. It came about in this wise. In the winter of 1869 the Directors of the Philosophical Institution wished M. Paradol to lecture to them on the social and political aspects of French Society, in which he then played so conspicuous a part, and, as from a variety of causes, to which I need not refer, I was in the habit of corresponding with him, they requested me to arrange the matter for them.

I gladly embraced the opportunity of making his personal acquaintance, and invited him to pay us a visit. When he was staying in my house I took him to call on Mr. Erskine, then certainly one of the most remarkable and interesting men in Edinburgh. Strangely different as they were, I felt that they would sympathise, and I knew that they had many subjects of common interest. I introduced M. Paradol as a friend of the De Broglies, who could

give Mr. Erskine the latest news of the circle of friends to whom he was bound by so many associations. For a time Mr. Erskine talked to him about the old days at Coppet, and his recollections of Madame de Staël. Very soon, however, as his wont was, he diverged into the subjects which continually occupied his thoughts, and he did so in a manner which at first was somewhat startling. "As a member of the liberal party, M. Paradol," he said, "your religious opinions are probably not of a very positive kind." M. Paradol assured him, in a very reverential tone, that his religious point of view was less negative than that of many of his countrymen, and that if his creed was not very definite he held it very sincerely. Mr. Erskine's face lighted up with that expression of sublime earnestness which every one who knew him must remember. He felt that he had a sympathetic listener, whose position enabled him, if he chose, to carry his message where it was much needed, and to proclaim it in words that would be listened to, and he determined not to miss his opportunity.

He poured out to him his own deep and simple faith; he cleared away the needless superfluities with which tradition and dogmatism have obscured Christianity; and told him that pretty nearly all that Christ Himself had enjoined on us was that we should love God. "Love God," he repeated over and over again, "that is about the whole of it." I cannot of course recall what he said, and if I could it would be needless to you. It was the doctrine he taught us all; but I, who knew him much less than you did, never heard him put it with so much power and simplicity. Paradol was very much struck with it, and with the man altogether. He did not know what to make of him. When we got down into the street he was eloquent in his expressions of his wonder and admiration. I had told him before who he was, but he insisted on hearing it

over again. That he was a member of the Bar who had succeeded to a good family estate, and that his "two books" were Plato and the Bible, was all that I could tell him. He was bewildered and awe-struck at the appearance of a personage so far elevated above the negative and colourless conception which he had formed of an English country gentleman. He was so simple, so considerate, and even indulgent, and yet he was so dignified and authoritative, and he dismissed him with something so like an apostolic benediction that he could not get over it. When he left us a few days after on the pier of Leith—for, unlike a Frenchman, he went up to London in mid-winter by sea,—he thanked me specially for taking him to see "that kind of old prophet." After Mr. Erskine's death he wrote me the letter which I send you. It was one of the last which I received from him, and as it will interest a wider circle than that to which Mr. Erskine was known, you may perhaps like to publish it.—Yours most truly,

J. LORIMER.

M. PARADOL TO PROFESSOR LORIMER.

PARIS, *Wednesday, Aug. 6th.*

MY DEAR LORIMER,—I am very thankful for your kind letter, and also for the interesting papers which you have sent to me. The *Scotsman* and the *Spectator* on our admirable Erskine were most welcome, and I have remarked in the *Spectator* a letter which I am inclined to attribute to you. We have had and we have still here many good and even religious men, but what is rare and original, quite Scotch and anti-French, is a life so unearthly and spiritual as that of Erskine spent out of the Church; when a man is religious here, he is either a member of the clergy or an

outside political rather than religious defender, like our Montalembert and Falloux. I am happy to learn that you are well; we are still in the uncertainty here about everything, as well as about my own affairs. Afraid of electoral reforms, and of electoral agitation, the Emperor and his ministry have thrown themselves into the plebiscite absurdity and the constituent agitation, which is a dreadful mess, still more puzzling and dangerous than the Pechey injustice.—With my best love to all, believe me ever yours sincerely, P. PARADOL.

404. TO MRS. MACHAR.

EDINBURGH, *Feb.* 1, 1870.

THERE are few living now whose words are so welcome to my heart as yours, and in whose hopes and sorrows I feel such a readiness to sympathise. I am become very weak in body, and have probably a good deal of suffering before me, but my chief burden is the remembrance of past sins. Although I believe them forgiven, yet they often come between me and the face of my heavenly Father. I do not doubt His love, but I desire to have a more living sense of it. I would say to Him, "Be not silent to me." "Say unto my soul, I am thy salvation." I need the Holy Spirit to quicken my cold affections, and to help me to apprehend what is contained in the unspeakable gift of Christ. The assurance that "God afflicteth not willingly, but for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness," is a great support. He brought us into being that He might educate us into the likeness of His own Son. This is, I believe, His unchangeable purpose concerning us all, a blessed purpose surely; and when we think of the manifestation of His purpose, Jesus Christ, we can scarcely

conceive anything lower or less to be intended. This is a rest.—Yours, etc., T. ERSKINE.

This letter was written a short time before his death. The answer to it was read to him only ten days before the close, and was the last letter, save a note from Professor Lushington, which he was able to listen to.

CHAPTER XIII.

The Close.

DURING the spring and summer of 1868 Mr. Erskine's health had on the whole improved. There was one short but solemn interruption. He was suddenly threatened with a malady which he knew must, if unchecked, terminate quickly and painfully in death. He faced the likelihood with a calmness and courage the more remarkable that he shrank from pain, and had always a dread of the act of dying. "I should not like to die," he had once said to a friend, "in a frenzy of pain, all the decencies of a death-bed lost sight of in physical agony." Now this seemed impending. As his niece Mrs. Paterson sat by him reading those parts of the Bible which he indicated, and while he awaited the effect of the treatment, he said to her, "It is a very solemn pause, but I can trust Him absolutely. Still, I should have liked my death not to have been a painful one, but to have passed away with my door open and my friends coming in and out." The treatment was successful, the malady was checked,—but these words were remembered when the last illness came, when all was done, and done successfully, to carry out his desire.

Soon as any capacity for work returned he was once more at his writings, aided alternately by his two most competent and devoted lady friends. By his residing latterly so much in Edinburgh, the ties of an early friend-

ship with his cousin George Dundas (Lord Manor) had been drawn closer. They were seeing each other daily, when death suddenly stept in and took his friend from his side, —a loss felt by Mr. Erskine deeply, and felt to the end. There was yet another parting, with his dear friend James Mackenzie, who died a few months later. The last meeting here was singularly impressive to those who witnessed it. Mr. Mackenzie was just dying; he sat in bed with eyes closed, insensible, his head laid back upon the pillow, his silver locks floating as in a pale light over his forehead, his finely chiselled features, always beautiful, now set in the marble beauty of death. Sent for to bid him a last adieu, Mr. Erskine paused as he entered the room, stood for a few moments absorbed, gazing upon the sight, then gently approached, put his lips to those of the dying, and, not a word spoken, withdrew. Coming down to the dining-room with Mr. Mackenzie's niece, who had accompanied him, "he looked round the room," she tells us, "as if saying good-bye to it too, then told me of the gentle leave-taking, saying with that peculiar and tender smile he always had for James Mackenzie, 'his death is lovely, like himself.'"

For many months at this period Mr. Erskine suffered from an affection of the heart which gave rise not only to great bodily discomfort, but to much mental depression. At times, when under this depression, a conscience always very sensitive magnified some trivial fancied offences of the past till he became most unhappy in the retrospect. Those who saw him at such times, and listened to his bitter self-condemnation, might have misjudged, as if his faith in God, his trust in his Saviour, his confidence in the largeness of the divine love, had misgiven. Nothing was further from the truth. Never, not in his hours of greatest darkness, did he doubt or distrust his God and

Saviour, or feel uncertainty as to his personal relationship with Him. It was but the action of a diseased sensibility. This was manifested in the most striking manner at the close, when the burden and pressure of disease were removed.

On Thursday the 10th of March 1870 he drove out as usual into the country. He looked admiringly on the opening buds,—"swelling into life," he said, "just as he was passing out of it." His niece, who accompanied him, reminded him that his sister, as she watched it from her window at Morningside, used to call spring that "yearly miracle." "Yes," he said, "I am not passing out of life; the great miracle of entrance into fuller life is near—very near perhaps." He then asked Keble's Morning Hymn to be repeated, going before at times, and saying at the close, "I forgot it was so beautiful." That evening he was calm, though silent. During the night he had more sleep than usual, and slept quietly. But at breakfast-time a cough brought up some blood. He had suddenly broken a blood-vessel. The relief to head and heart was immediate, but he felt that his hours were numbered. "There was something majestic," Mrs. Paterson tells us,[1] "in his look and tone," as he sat up in bed taking, as he thought, his last farewells of those around. "You must not try to keep me," he said quite cheerfully, but solemnly. But when Dr. John Brown, who came in as he repeated the words, said, "You will take this, dear sir; *we* cannot keep you when God sends for you," Mr. Erskine answered, "You are right; give it me, I will wait His time." Then presently he said to the doctor, with a touch of his old humour, "I am better now,—if you had not given me

[1] The narrative which follows is derived from full and interesting records preserved by his niece and by Miss Gourlay, who, along with his nephew, were his close and loving attendants by night and by day on till the close.

that!" then added solemnly, "His time." "*Thy* time, O Lord." All that day the relieved heart seemed to leave his spirit free, and the grand calm, and the loving messages to his relations, remembering each, and suiting the message to each, were wonderful.

Turning in the course of the day to Miss Gourlay, he said to her, "I want the paper in the tin box—the one on Education and Probation—to be printed separately as a tract, and I want it to be prefaced by these words: 'This principle of Education lies at the very basis of the Gospel, for it contains in it, or expresses, the everlasting purpose of God towards us, to make us partakers of His own righteousness.'"

Saturday the 12th.—All this day he grew weaker, and felt and hoped that the end was at hand. "How long, O Lord, how long? Grant me Thy patience." He repeated Isaiah xli. 10, "Fear not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness." "These sayings," said Miss G., "are faithful and true." "I know," he replied, "that He has said them, *therefore* they are faithful and true." "Do you think it is near the end—perhaps just a few hours?" "We don't know that," was answered, "but whenever patience has had her perfect work." "Yes," said he, "that 's it; the purpose of God for us: I have sinned against Him all my life, and *so* sinned against Him, yet—" "He is your Father," Miss G. said. "Yes, my Father."

Sunday the 13th.—Between services the Rev. Mr. Sandford came and administered the Holy Communion. His nephew and niece and Miss Gourlay partook of it along with him. He watched as Mr. Sandford went up to each, evidently praying for them. With folded hands, and following the service with deep feeling, he received the

Sacrament, saying at the close, "Oh wonderful! my Lord and my God!"

In the evening his kind friend Dr. John Brown came in, for the fourth or fifth time. Mr. Erskine brightened up and said, "Well, here I am still, you see." Dr. Brown said that many were anxiously asking for him, and "just now I have been talking about you with Lushington." "Ah, Lushington," he said, with a smile, and then repeated a Greek sentence.[1] We asked the meaning: "Not only Nature's finest workmanship, but made of Nature's finest clay. My loving farewell to him."

Monday the 14th.—All day very peaceful. Several friends came in at his "open door," and for each he had just the right word.

Tuesday the 15th.—A day of much bodily uneasiness. Throughout indeed there was much physical restlessness. His position had to be shifted frequently, and many little services to be rendered. When some of these were not rendered as promptly or as efficiently as he desired, his patience for the moment failed, but, instantly recovering, with the utmost grace he craved forgiveness.

Often and often did he say to those who were trying to soothe his bodily sufferings, "I am very grateful. I am very much obliged. I thank you all for Jesus Christ's sake." Frequently on such occasions one or other of the two passages was repeated. "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him," and "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto Me." "Wonderful words," he added as he recited the last of these verses—"what exquisite beauty in them—what tenderness!"

[1] Mr. Lushington was Professor of Greek in the University of Glasgow.

That day about four o'clock he seemed very spent, but on Dr. John Brown coming in he seemed pleased, said some loving words, and then "'He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.' Farewell."

Wednesday and Thursday.—Less restlessness, and always the same steadfast trust, calm peace, and holy joy. Whispered words coming ever and anon from his lips, almost always words of Holy Scripture—very seldom his own words—and so long as strength lasted, he repeated each verse from beginning to end. Among those most frequently thus repeated were—"God so loved the world," etc.; "God commended His love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us;" "He tasted death for every man;" "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth from all sin;" "He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him;" "Fear not, for I am with thee," etc.; "Call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me;" "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me," etc.

The Psalms were much upon his lips. For more than fifty years they had been his daily study and delight, the cadence of many of their well-known verses the softest, sublimest music to his ear. And now they refreshed his soul in death. The 20th, 25th, 26th, 27th, 31st, 32d, 62d, 73d, 86th, 103d, 116th, 130th, and 139th were special favourites; recited by himself with deep solemnity of tone, or, when voice failed, listened to and re-echoed as repeated to him by others.

The Sonship and the Sacrifice of Jesus Christ were now much in his thoughts. "Lord Jesus, Lord Jesus Christ," he said over and over again, in such a tone of earnest rever-

ence, love, and tenderness, as if a new revelation of the meaning and preciousness of the Incarnation had been given. The Divine Sonship was contemplated as embodied in the person of Christ. "Jesus, the Son of God," he was heard to whisper to himself, "*and* God;" the peculiar emphasis laid upon the *and* indicating the current of his thoughts. "Say words of God to me," he once said. In answer to his request, the words which for weeks before had been often upon his own lips, were repeated—"This is My body, broken for you," etc. He listened and was satisfied; very marked throughout his selection of those verses which speak of the death of our Redeemer and its results. And running through the whole was the close direct sustained communion with God, breaking forth in expressions like these:—"God, my God; I can trust Him utterly." "O Lord God, heavenly Father, my heavenly Father, I am in Thy hands." "O Lord, how long? Grant me Thy patience, keep not silence." "O Lord, my soul longs after Thee." "I desire to do Thy will—yes, living or dying to be the Lord's." "Holy glorious God! let me see Thy face—my Lord and my God!"

Being laid for the night he said, "I want to be left alone; I want to have my dealings with God; I want *that* to be done with first. *Done* with! it's *never* done with; but I mean—" there the voice failed. He put himself evidently to sleep with a sort of command to himself, "Be still and know that I am God."

Friday the 18th.—In the course of the day his nephew writes to Miss Wedgwood—

"My dear uncle is still here, and though not *suffering*, it is a long weary death, but most peaceful and trustful. I wish you were here to see it, and get a loving look and word. If many loved him in his life, more would love

him in his death. *All* his words, conscious or unconscious, are expressions of love to God and man, without a cloud. His very tones are so gentle and loving. As he has spoken much in all states of consciousness and unconsciousness, you see *all* that is in him, and I believe it might be said, 'God saw that it was good.'

"May our last end be like his. . . ."

Leaving him for the night his niece kissed him, as she thought probably for the last time. Repeating her name, he said, "Beloved, love to your uncle. All's well," and then fell asleep.

"A loving farewell to your uncle" had been the first words addressed to Mrs. Paterson on the preceding Friday, when death seemed imminent, and he was bidding adieu to those around. Day after day—again and again—he sent messages to his friend—"Dear Mr. Campbell, my gratitude to him—beloved Mr. Campbell." And now upon Friday the 18th, three different times when life seemed fluttering into death, his niece caught the words addressed to her, "Farewell—beloved—love to your uncle."

Nor was it by direct messages alone that it appeared how present his absent friend was to his thoughts. As they were once raising him in his bed he said—"Do it gently—with the gentleness of God. Be very gentle with me. There's Mr. Campbell, dear Mr. Campbell, he's always faithful, but so gentle. Try to be gentle, with holy gentleness."

Saturday the 19th.—To the same friend in London to whom her husband had written, Mrs. Paterson now writes:—

"We wish you could have had some of the comfort of hearing some of the *calm* (I would say manly) words of those last days, and of seeing the brow gradually widen as *every ruffle* passed away for days before the end, and the

loving tone and *grateful* acknowledgment of our efforts to soothe the distress of the body. . . .

"All these sweet human touches were very precious, and then the marvellous entrance into such steadfast, simple trust, and the strange inner clearness of spirit and constant sleeping-and-waking communion with his God. . . ."

Sunday the 20th.—At two o'clock in the morning he called Miss Gourlay three times by name. Looking at her as she came, distinctly and very solemnly he said, "I am done, everything is *done*—for me—with this outward life—this *outward* life; but I have *perfect* confidence and *perfect* hope for the eternal life. Will you try to do what you can . . . for me . . . put . . . in order . . ." He meant his papers.

Two days before, while seeming to be asleep, there had issued from his lips, "My beloved mother—my dear, dear brother—my beloved Davie—my beloved Christian."

And now in a sweet, clear, musical voice he called out "Christian, sister!" Already were the broken ties of the past being revived and re-formed.

In the evening Dr. Brown came in. He looked at him with a half smile and welcome recognition. "You there!" he said. "Yes," replied Dr. Brown; "I will stay with you." "To the end," Mr. Erskine added. He was raised upon the pillows, and folded his hands in prayer. At intervals were heard—"O Lord my God . . . Jesus . . . Jesus Christ . . . love . . . the peace of God . . . for ever and ever, for Jesus' sake, Amen and Amen." Then there was a silence, a change passed over his face, there were long intermissions between the breaths, but no struggle, no appearance of suffering; at last one long gentle sigh, like that of a wearied infant dropping asleep, —one last breath, and he was gone.

The countenance became very beautiful after death. It seemed to lengthen, and the wrinkles and marks of suffering and conflict which had made it rugged all passed away. Through the whole of that last week there was a nobility in it, a look of calm patriarchal dignity, of peaceful gentle patience, waiting till his time came, a striking realisation of his own conception of what the last moments of earthly life ought to be.

Next morning Dr. Brown wrote—

"Our dear sweet-hearted friend is away. He died very gently last night at a quarter to ten, laid his pathetic weary head on the pillow like a child, and his last words were 'Lord Jesus.'"

Dr. Campbell, to whom his niece had been sending daily bulletins, wrote thus a few days afterwards to his sons:—

"My beloved Mr. Erskine died last Sunday evening. A time of comparative ease and freedom from suffering, combined with great weakness and occasional symptoms that seemed to himself and to those around him to intimate the close, spread the consciousness of a death-bed over so many days and nights that to him and to them, and to us to whom there was a letter almost every day, it has been a *prolonged parting;* giving occasion for oft-repeated utterances of his faith and hope and love, which are to us all memories of our latest communion with him here, which solemnly and most sweetly connect what we remember as his past life among us with our hope for that on which he has now entered: our hope, as his hope, being an anchor of the soul, sure and steadfast, having its hold within the veil."

Few have ever passed away from among their fellows of whom so large a number of those who knew him best, and were most competent to judge, would have said, as they

did of Mr. Erskine, that he was the best, the holiest man they ever knew,—the man most human yet most divine, with least of the stains of earth, with most of the spirit of heaven; the man in whom the ideal of his own favourite poet stood in every feature realised:—

> "I'm apt to think the man
> That could surround the sum of things, and spy
> The heart of God and secrets of His Empire,
> Would speak but love—with him the bright result
> Would change the hue of intermediate scenes
> And make one thing of all theology."
>
> GAMBOLD.

CHAPTER XIV.

Reminiscences by Principal Shairp.

My dear Dr. Hanna,—You have often urged me to attempt some connected narrative of the life and character of our revered friend, the late Mr. Erskine of Linlathen, and I have often myself felt a strong desire to do so. But as soon as the desire has arisen, I have been restrained by a sense of utter inability. I felt the truth of those words which Dr. Macleod Campbell wrote to Bishop Ewing soon after Mr. Erskine's death: 'No man is able to say to those who knew him not what he was; no man could say this to those who knew him in a way that they would feel satisfying.' All that I shall now attempt is to put together such recollections of him as I can give, in the hope that these may be found to be in keeping with the impression made by those delightful letters which you are publishing.

Although it was as a spiritual teacher working by voice and pen that Mr. Erskine was known to the world, yet one cannot fully understand his mind and influence without taking some account of his human temperament and earthly circumstances. In him, hardly less than in more mundane characters, the race from which he came, and the people who surrounded his childhood, had much to do with making him what he ultimately became. He himself would have been one of the last to underrate what he owed to his ancestry. On either side he was sprung

from a far-descended and gracious race, and among these, his kindred, he passed a childhood and youth sheltered from those early shocks and jars which probably lie at the root of much of the unkindness and asperity there is in the world. Equally on his father's and his mother's side he came from what the late biographer of Walter Scott used to call, with so much satisfaction, 'a fine old Scottish family.' You have well drawn the character of his great-grandfather, Colonel John Erskine. Often of a winter evening, as with one or two guests Mr. Erskine drew in his chair round the dining-room fire at Linlathen, he would look up to the family pictures that hung round the room, and tell their history, and remark on their characters. When he looked at the portrait of 'the Black Colonel,' as he was called, partly from his swarthy complexion, perhaps too from the dark armour in which he is encased, he would speak of him with a peculiar twinkle in his eye and a humorous smile on his face. Among the many virtues you have attributed to the Black Colonel, that bulwark of Presbyterianism, there is one you have omitted,—his great love of litigation. His great-grandson, however, used to tell how on his death-bed he is reported to have said, 'Haena I thretty gude ga'in pleas on hand, and that fule Jock will hae compounded them a' a fortnicht after I'm dead!' That 'fule Jock' was his son, the great Scottish jurist, author of the *Institutes*. His picture hangs near his father's, and his pale chiselled refined features form a striking contrast to the broad swarthy pugnative visage of the Black Colonel. Mr. Erskine would also dwell lovingly on an excellent copy by Urquhart of Raeburn's beautiful picture of a refined old lady's face. This was the portrait of the Hon. Christian Mackay, daughter of the third Lord Reay, which hung beside that of her grave earnest husband, Dr. John Erskine, minister of Greyfriars,

who was Mr. Erskine's uncle. In the late Raeburn Exhibition in Edinburgh the original of this picture of Christian Mackay was regarded as one of the finest of the many fine old-lady portraits by that great artist. He would also speak of the strong homely sense mingled with genial yet refined humanity that looked out from the face of Lady Christian Bruce, the wife of his uncle James, the laird of Cardross. Most of the pictures that hung round that dining-room belonged to his father's side of the house.

Of his maternal ancestors, though there was but one picture on the wall, the images dwelt no less vividly in his heart. At Airth Castle, his mother's home, the happiest days of his childhood were spent. The old Lady of Airth, his maternal grandmother, you have yourself well described, reading her English-Church service every Sunday to her family in her own drawing-room, while the Presbyterian worship was going on in the kirk, which then stood hard by the Castle. The old place of Airth is one deeply to impress itself on a young imagination.

Out of the carse of Falkirk, that great dead level plain that stretches from Falkirk to Stirling, which, as the great battle-field of Scotland, holds in Scottish history, as Dean Stanley has suggested, the same place which the plain of Esdraelon held in the history of Israel,—out of that carse, about a mile inland from the Links of Forth, rises a scarpment or ridge of sandstone abruptly breaking from the surrounding flats. On the edge of that scarpment stands the old castle, originally a square peel tower with pent-house roof, like those common all over Scotland. To that tower has been built on a long high line of building, with crow-stepped gables, a steep roof, and dormer windows projecting from it. This range of building forms the later dwelling-house,—all that was there in Mr. Erskine's childhood; though since then there have been

made quite modern and not very congruous additions. This long building, flanked on the west by the older tower, looks down, over a small precipice, on a quaint garden beneath, and beyond the garden are old trees and a lazy stream lingering towards the Forth. The house fronts southward, and across the dead level carse the windows look far away to the rising ground of Falkirk muir, the scene of two great battles. Contiguous to the house, on the north-east side, is the old churchyard, full of ancient graves and grey tombstones. A church must once have stood there, but it has disappeared. Behind the house, to north and west, long straight avenues and park trees stretch on toward the grounds of Dunmore Park. It is almost an ideal abode of an ancient Scottish family, like those Walter Scott loved to picture. Such outwardly was the place and neighbourhood where Thomas Erskine drank in his first impressions of a world in which he was to abide for fourscore years. For the associations of a mere town house in childhood go for little compared with those of the first country home.

The inside of Airth Castle was warm to him with much loving-kindness and old-fashioned yet refined simplicity. The old servant, himself quite a part of the family, who spent his whole lifetime at Airth, lives in Dean Ramsay's well-known story about Mrs. Moray of Abercairney and the salt-spoon,—a story, by the way, with which Mr. Erskine furnished the Dean. But to that quaint example of

"The constant service of the antique world,"

Dean Ramsay has not added one pathetic incident with which Mr. Erskine used to accompany it. That old family man-servant, John Campbell, lived to see Mrs. Graham's eldest son, the heir of the house, go to India in his country's service. Years after, the ship which was ex-

pected to bring him back to England, brought the news of his death. On the day when the new mourning suit which John was to wear for his young master's death was laid down on the table before him, he fainted away. That kind of faithful affection in a domestic servant, common enough at the beginning of this century, has become rarer now-a-days.

Airth, Kippenross, Keir, Ochtertyre, Cardross, with occasional visits to Ardoch, his grandmother's home, and to Abercairney,—the summers of childhood and boyhood spent in these melted into him with associations of beauty and ancestral repose which were indelible, and the warm atmosphere of human life that then surrounded him, sweetened his whole nature to the core. It had no doubt much to do with drawing out that deep and tender affectionateness which made him all life through the much-loving and much-beloved man he was.

In this he was very unlike most men. Hearts more or less, I suppose, most of us have, but we keep them so close-cased and padlocked, we wear an outside so hard or dry, that little or none of the love that may be within escapes to gladden those around us. And so life passes without any of the sweetening to society that comes when affection is not only felt but expressed,—for to be of any use to others it must be expressed in some way. Mr. Erskine was in this happy above most men, that, being gifted with a heart more than usually tender and sympathetic, he had brought with him from childhood the art of expressing it simply and naturally. So it was that the loving-kindness that was in him streamed freely forth, making the happy happier, and lightening the load of the sorrowful. It was as if inside his man's understanding he hid, as it were, a woman's heart. And though this is a thing no early training could have implanted, yet when it

was there, the warm affection that surrounded his boyhood was the very atmosphere to cherish and expand it.

If this had been all, it might have led to softness, but the society of his childhood, though based on affection, had enough of the old Scottish verve and intellect in it to keep it from degenerating into sentimentalism. His own busy intellect too was early stirring, and the winter home of his mother in St. David Street was pervaded by that old-world simplicity and frugality which is so bracing to character. Besides, even if the boy's early years had been too tenderly nurtured, school life, as it then existed, especially in the rough old High School of Edinburgh, was sure to give scope enough for the hardy virtues.

Although I had long known Mr. Erskine by reputation and through mutual friends, it was not till the year 1854 that I became personally acquainted with him. As I happened to be in Scotland in the winter of that year, his cousin Miss Jane Stirling wrote to him that I was anxious to meet him, and he at once invited me to visit him at Linlathen.

It was, I think, on a Saturday afternoon, the 7th of January in that year, that he received me in that library at Linlathen which his friends so well remember. I had not been any time with him before he opened on those subjects which lay always deepest in his thoughts. Often during that visit, in the library, or in walks after dark up and down the corridor, or, when the weather allowed, in walks about the grounds, those subjects were renewed. The one thing that first struck me at that time was his entire openness of mind, his readiness to hear whatever could be urged against his own deepest convictions, the willingness with which he welcomed any difficulties felt by others, and the candour with which he answered them from his own experience and storehouse of reflection. He exemplified

that text which he often quoted, 'The heart of the righteous man studieth to answer.' This was a characteristic of him which is not often found in men so religious. Commonly the statement of any view, very unlike that which they have been accustomed to hold, shocks them; and younger inquirers, seeing that they are thought impious or give pain, cease to reveal their thoughts, and intercourse is at an end. With Mr. Erskine it was just the reverse of this. His whole manner and spirit elicited confidence from younger men. No thought could ever have occurred to them which, if they were serious about it, they need have hesitated to tell him. And it would seldom be that they did not find in his replies something either really helpful, or at least something well worth their pondering.

The following are some notes of his conversations made during that first visit.

What is the true guide?

Answer.—I fall back more and more on first principles. The conscience in each man is the Christ in each man. It is the ray of light coming straight from the great Fountain of Light; or rather, it is the eye guided by the Sun; or it is the child's shell murmuring of its native ocean; or the cord let down by God into each man by which He leads each. Often the string lies quite slack; the man is not conscious of the guidance and the guide. Then the string becomes tight, and the man feels the drawing, he is conscious of God. The great thing is to identify duty and conscience hourly with God.

The universal diffusion of conscience through all men is Christ in all men,—"Christ in you the hope of glory."

He was in the man, and the man was made by Him, and the man knew Him not. This is true of every man by nature. And the great thing is to become conscious of Him, and to know Him through Himself revealed in



conscience. 'The Spirit (not the wind) bloweth whither it will, and ye hear the sound thereof, but cannot tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth.' But for not being able to tell we are in fault. This is our sin. [This was with Mr. Erskine one favourite gloss upon that text in St. John's Gospel, though I never felt sure that it was a correct one. Besides this he gave to it other applications.]

"No man hath ascended up to heaven. . . ." And so it is only Christ in the man, the man who has become one with Christ, and Christlike, in whom the old self is subdued, that can ascend up to heaven.

This light, this conscience, manifests itself often to man as witnessing against his present state, making him feel the hollowness and discomfort of life apart from God. Still, the witnessing against him,—this is Christ within the man, grieving for his alienation, calling him to be reconciled. This condemnation and uneasiness of soul is the sound or tone which God's voice takes when speaking in the natural heart. It is God and Christ calling him to return. This voice of God sounds loud in great crises. If a man were tempted to commit murder, then it would sound more loudly than usual. But it does not then for the first time begin to sound. It has been sounding always, through all his ordinary life, in a low habitual tone, but he has not heard, nor cared to hear it.

There is into each man a continual inflowing of the Logos. It is by virtue of Christ being in all men that conscience is universal in men.

"He that answereth before he heareth is a son that causeth shame." So we ought to hear this voice of the Spirit before we act or speak; we ought to wait for it, and not make haste. "The heart of the righteous *studieth* to answer." Man ought to wait on this voice, for it is always there, if we would hear it. When our Lord said, "He

that hath ears to hear, let him hear," it was this inward ear he meant.

This conscience, this inward light, is the great organ of Theology. Only that which commends itself to his conscience, that which each man can feel to be right and true, that only he really believes. Whatever more he fancies he believes on authority or otherwise, is not real belief, or faith. But does not this make the old Sophists' saying true, *ἄνθρωπος μέτρον πάντων*, or each man's individual frame or feeling the measure of truth for him? No! For,

1*st*, It is of the true nature of conscience not to be individual. Conscience is not mine, I am conscience's. Each man does not possess it, but is possessed by it. It speaks in virtue of a higher light than itself, of which it declares itself to be but a ray. It swells outward to Christ, and finds its fulness only in Him and God. It is Their continual witness, referring back not to itself but to Them. Therefore this light never can cut itself off from its source, and set itself up as an independent authority, for this would be to abdicate its own nature.

2*d*, Neither will a man, who is truly awakened to listen to conscience, set up his own conscience as a rival of the Bible, and reject all Scripture that does not at once commend itself to him. For the conscience that is true is humble, and feels that it is but a feeble struggling ray, and will lie at the feet of the true light. Only it will not say that it believes anything till it does believe it, that is, till it feels it to be right and true. Further than this it cannot go. That larger light which men may urge on its acceptance, on the authority of the Church or of Scripture, it does not deny this, or set itself against it. Only it cannot take it in, make it its own, till for itself it sees light through it. It will say, What you urge me to believe may be true, but I do not know it to be true now.

I may come to see it, or I may not, but at present I am not in a condition to witness for it.

Christ is the great universal conscience, calling to every man, Hear and your soul shall live—live to God, die to yourself.

Next day he added this corollary to the above: God speaks to me in conscience, but I do not always apprehend His language. I seek to know and apprehend it, and I find far more in the Bible than anywhere else that explains conscience. It may be said, All things are calls, all things are intended to educate men, and so in a sense they are. But the Bible is so in a peculiar way. I explain conscience by the Bible, and the Bible by conscience, both ways; but till they meet and illuminate each the other, there is no true light, no true conviction.

The Gospel history is the consciousness I find within me expressed outwardly. It is only by finding a oneness between the outward history and the inward consciousness that I can understand the history, and the history makes me understand my own consciousness. The history of Jesus Christ, what He sorrowed and suffered, is a perfect outward manifestation of what will go on imperfectly in every man's heart now, just in proportion as he enters into the mind of Christ.

Another day during that visit Mr. Erskine's conversation took this turn:—Christ stands to us in two capacities. *First*, As the Representative of the Father He came, showing us what is the character of the Father, bringing down to us His holy, righteous, loving purpose towards us. And so He comes down now to each man, is, as it were, again incarnate in each man's conscience, and in that conscience, the true light, the Spirit within each man, He grieves over each man's sin, agonises for it in each man, 'suffers, the just for the unjust.' Just as you

might conceive the spirit of St. John to enter inside the spirit of Barabbas,—St. John's heart to be shut up in Barabbas's heart,—how it would be pained and grieved by the dark polluted environment in which it found itself! Naturally it would will itself away from such an abode. But if it were to stay there, and though grieving and sore pained yet refuse to depart till it had purified Barabbas and won him back to God, in some such way we may conceive of the Christ indwelling in each man. Or as an upright high-minded elder brother might grieve and feel pain at seeing some great meanness or base action in a younger. At first the elder only would feel pain and grief, the younger would feel none. But this pain of the elder might in time be seen by the younger, and being seen might draw him to feel the same, to enter into the sorrow of the elder, and so to be of one mind with him, and be delivered from his meanness.

Christ came once, and was manifested eighteen hundred years ago; but both before and since that time He has been, as it were, diffused through humanity, lying at the bottom of every man as the basis of his being. It was in Him that God created man—just as light was the first created thing, spread abroad diffusedly, but not gathered up into the sun till the fourth day. So Christ the Head was latent in humanity as the Head, but the Head did not come out and show itself to the senses till the personal Christ appeared in the flesh.

Secondly, Christ's second capacity is as the Head of the whole race. In this capacity He fulfils God's whole will, accepts the suffering which is eternally inseparable from sin, bears it willingly, not indeed to save us from suffering, but to call each of us to accept God's whole will gladly as He accepted it, to accept suffering when sent, not as a punishment but as healing, and so to follow Christ,—to



call each to die continually to self, and to accept death as a duty, as the declaration of God's will and purpose towards us,—to accept it, not with sullen resignation, or general bare trust in God's mercy, but as feeling that God's purpose for us is always and wholly good, whether in life or death. It is through dying to self continually in life, and at last through actual death, willingly borne, only thus that man can overcome. Sin and suffering are eternally connected. The body which belongs to this seen system of things, to which man alienated from God has surrendered himself, it is righteous that it should suffer and die for its sin. And the spiritual man will see and feel the righteousness of this, and willingly give himself up to suffering and death. And so Christ the righteous, as the Elder Brother of our race, standing at the head of humanity, willingly entered into and bore this death which the rest had to bear, and by bearing He overcame it. And so it is only by closing with death and suffering willingly (in the fellowship with Him), by accepting it as righteous, and apprehending God's righteous loving purpose in it, that any man can overcome it. . . .

Christ once entered into humanity, and enters again into each man, not only to express God's grief and pain over each man's sin, but also that He may say in His capacity as the Son, and also as the Head of the race, Righteous art Thou, O God, in thus judging sin, in connecting suffering eternally with sin. In this aspect both the capacities of Christ combine.

Another time this was the turn his conversation took :— Suppose a man who had all his life long been a reckless profligate, sinning every day without the least compunction ; but suppose that at last it had come to this that he must either commit one of his daily sins, tell one of his habitual lies, or be put to death unless he did so. It might be

that this might pull him up; conscience might awake, check him, and keep him from the meanness of buying his life by one of those sins which he had been in the habit of committing daily without scruple. Here something within might whisper, Do it this once, and then you will have time to repent of all your past life; for if you die now, you must go at once to hell. This would seem to be conscience, but it would be a false conscience. The true conscience would say, Do it not, fear not that God can ever punish a man for doing right, or that a man can ever lose by doing God's will, by obeying His own voice within him. In every call from God to arise and do the right, justification for the past is implied. The justification comes contained in this voice of conscience. The command to abstain from sin implies that God justifies,—has put away the past sin. And thus when the man consents with his full will to death rather than do the wrong, and recognises and accepts in the call to die God's loving purpose toward him, he receives the forgiveness and justification into himself. Every call of God to do right, every voice of conscience, is a new coming of justification to the man. Even if it come in the shape of a condemnation of the man's present condition, it is still the same, a fresh inflow of justification from God. For why should He deal with the man at all, even to condemn him, if He did not intend to deliver him from sin and alienation?

When Sir Walter Raleigh was brought to trial, the counsel for his defence pleaded that he could not by the law of England, or by right justice, be condemned, or even tried, for the said offence, because it took place long ago, and he had received the royal commission to serve the Queen since the offence had been committed. And every time the royal commission was given to a man, it by its

nature declared that he was a perfectly clear, free man. So every time that God speaks to us in conscience, we may accept it as declaring that He still justifies us, pardons us, calls us to put away our sin, to die to our own selves, to give up our own will, and enter into His will. And if we apprehend His call thus, and do surrender ourselves willingly to His will, we accept the justification.

Another time during that same visit he said:—The Bible is the great interpreter of consciousness, and of conscience. Conscience is not mine, I am its. Often a man does not understand his conscience. A man, for instance, is wroth with his neighbour who has wronged him, vents his anger against him, and longs to be revenged. Another comes and says to him, Why are you angry with that man? Why do you wish to trample on him? He answers, Because my conscience, looking at this injury in God's light, tells me that I do well to be angry and revengeful against him. The other rejoins, Did God really give you this conscience, this sense of your neighbour's sin, in order that you may trample on him, or not rather that, feeling deeply his sin, you may help him out of it? Again, years afterwards the expostulator finds the angry man on the point of death; he is overwhelmed with the remembrance of his sin, and he says that all this terror is just the effect of God's anger towards him, and the sign that He intends to punish him. The expostulator puts him in mind of their conversation years ago, asks him if he thinks that God has this anger, and has made this declaration of it in his terror-stricken conscience, that he may destroy him, and not rather that he may help him out of his sin and his terror—just as the strong conviction of his neighbour's wrong-doing years ago was given to himself, not that he might take vengeance on him, but that he might help him out of his sin.

Such were some of the lines on which his thoughts ran during that first visit in 1854. All who knew him will probably recognise in them either the very thoughts they have themselves heard from him, or at least thoughts like those they have heard from him. These were the channels which his mind latterly had grooved for itself, and which it wore ever deeper as time went on. When he was alone with a sympathetic hearer, and sometimes to those who were not very sympathetic, his discourse would return again and again to the same channels, and flow on for hours together in thoughtful monologue.

These more inward subjects of conversation he often varied by recurring to the events and the persons of his past life which had most impressed him. He would often talk with much affection of the friends he had made abroad, —at Paris, at Geneva, and at Rome, and most frequently recurred to the memory of Madame de Broglie.

Of home events, that which filled the largest place in his retrospect was the revival of religion which began at Row in 1828, and continued there till it was cut short by the summary verdict of the General Assembly in 1831. Mr. Erskine, as is well known, had been an earnest sympathiser and fellow-worker with Mr. Campbell, had stood by his side through all the persecutions he was called to undergo, and had been a witness of that never-to-be-forgotten night in the General Assembly which cast out from the Church of his fathers one of the saintliest of her sons. The decisions of the Assembly could not touch Mr. Erskine, but all the more for this he felt the deep wrong which the Church by that act had done to his friend, and the still deeper injury she had done to herself. He never ceased to regard it as the stoning by the Church of Scotland of her best prophet, the deliberate rejection of the highest light vouchsafed to her in his time. Few felt as he did

that day; but as years went on more and more woke up to know what an evil thing had been done in the land. From that time on for many years he ceased to have any sympathy with the Church of Scotland, when not only the men, but the truth he most prized, had been so rudely trampled down. In his eyes all the calamities that befell her were the natural sequel of, perhaps judgments for, the wrong she had done in 1831. In the last twenty years of his life he came to know and value both the character and the teaching of some of the young generation of ministers, and from time to time he attended their ministrations. His was not the spirit to feel anything like sectarian hostility to the Church, though he believed it to have so deeply sinned, but he never ceased to feel righteous indignation against the wrong-doing, though not against the wrong-doers.

One story connected with this time he used to tell. It was of the Rev. William Dow, a good man, who was minister of a parish in the south of Scotland, but who for siding with the views of Mr. Campbell of Row was called to stand his trial before the General Assembly. On the Sunday immediately before he went to Edinburgh for his trial, being quite sure what fate awaited him, he thus addressed his country congregation :—"You all know that to-morrow I leave this to go to Edinburgh, and to stand my trial before the General Assembly. And the result I know will be that I shall be turned out of my parish, and that this is the last time I shall address you as your minister. This you all know. But there is one thing about myself which you do not know, but which I will tell you. When I first came here to be your minister I found difficulty in obtaining a house in the parish to live in. There was but one house in the parish I could have, that was suitable, and that belonged to a poor widow. I

went and offered a higher rent for her house than she paid. She was dispossessed, and I got the house. I put that poor woman out of her house then, and I hold it to be a righteous thing in God to put me out of my parish now."

This accepting the punishment as a righteous thing was entirely to Mr. Erskine's mind.

His friend Mr. Campbell of Row writes of him in 1863: 'He is very full, as has ever been his way, of the thoughts which have last taken form in his mind, and would bend everything to them; and my work, as of old, has been to endeavour to keep before him what he may seem to me to leave out of account.' This exactly describes his discourse as his friends knew it.—'And would bend everything to them,' that is, to the thoughts that for the time absorbed him. This was especially observable in many of the interpretations which he imposed on difficult texts of Scripture. They were exceedingly ingenious, and such as could only have occurred to a meditative and highly spiritual mind. But it often seemed, as if the interpretation was born from within his own thought, rather than gathered from impartial exegesis. So strong was the heat of his cherished convictions, that before them the toughest, most obdurate text gave way, melted and fused into the mould which his bias had framed for it. It was the characteristic of his mind to seize whatever truth it did see with a peculiar intensity of grasp. This is what Mr. Campbell in a letter of 1868 speaks of as his 'tendency to reduce many aspects of truth to one, making him hesitate to see now the importance, not to say the correctness, of what he once urged, making him, indeed, appear to give up what he once held. I do not believe that his views have at all changed as they appear to himself to have done. . . .' This passage seems to mark exactly the distinction between the minds of the two friends, as they struck me when I used to see them

together, or rather perhaps when, after conversing with one, I afterwards spoke to the other on the same subject. Mr. Erskine, whatever truth possessed him, threw himself wholly into it, became absorbed in it, expounded it with a gentle yet vehement eloquence, and illustrated it with a wealth of ingenious illustration which was quite foreign to Mr. Campbell's habits of thought. Mr. Campbell, on the other hand, even the truths he most realised, he could contemplate with long patience, could move round them, and consider them deliberately from every side, could see them in all their bearings on other truths, and see those other truths in their bearing on them. This patient power of balancing truths seemingly opposed, combined with the persistent adherence to his first cherished principles, contrasted strikingly with the vehemence with which Mr. Erskine flung himself on the thoughts that had once taken possession of him.

Arising perhaps out of this tendency in Mr. Erskine to be absorbed in one great truth, which he made to overbear all other truths that opposed it, was his belief in the final restitution of all men. This seemed to him to be the only legitimate issue of the Gospel. The conviction that it was so grew on him latterly, and he expressed it freely. He used to dwell much on those passages in St. Paul's epistles which seemed to him to favour this cherished belief of his. In one thing, however, Mr. Erskine was altogether unlike most of those who hold the tenets of Universalism. No man I ever knew had a deeper feeling of the exceeding evil of sin, and of the Divine necessity that sin must always be misery. His universalistic views did not in any way relax his profound sense of God's abhorrence of sin.

Any one who talked intimately with Mr. Erskine in later years could not help hearing these views put strongly before him. Often when he urged them on me he seemed

disappointed when I could not acquiesce. I used to urge that we do not know enough of the nature and possibilities of the human will to warrant us in holding that a time must come when it will yield to moral suasion which it may have resisted all through its earthly existence. Then as to the Bible, though there are some isolated texts which seem to make Mr. Erskine's way, yet Scripture, taken as a whole, speaks a quite different language. The strongest, most emphatic declarations against his views seem to be words of our Lord Himself. Therefore I shrink from all dogmatic assertions on this tremendous subject, desiring to go no further than the words of Scripture allow, till the day comes which shall bring forth His righteousness as the noonday.

It would be no adequate representation of Mr. Erskine as he appeared among men, to conceive of him as confining all his conversation to religion and theology. Yet these, no doubt, were his favourite subjects, those that lay nearest his heart; and when he met with a sympathetic listener he poured himself forth unweariedly. It was not any mere speculations about theology, any mere dealing through the intellect with what is called scientific theology. That was to him the mere outwork, the shell of something far more inward and vital. In that inner region that lies beyond all mere speculation you felt that his whole being was absorbed,—that he was making it his own, not with the mere understanding only, but that his heart, conscience, and spirit were wholly in it. And whether his listener understood all he said—for sometimes it was hard to catch for its subtlety,—and whether he agreed with it or not, for sometimes it was novel and even startling,—no one, who could feel what spiritual-mindedness was, could come away from his converse without feeling that in his society they

had breathed for a while a heavenly atmosphere. To return from it to common doings and every-day talk was like descending from the mount of vision to the dusty highway.

It used to be a strange feeling to walk about his place with him, wearing, as he did, to the outward eye, the guise of a Scottish laird, while all the while his inner spirit, you felt, was breathing the atmosphere of St. John. It was something so unlike anything you met with elsewhere in society. The Scotland of his later years, in his own rank, and among all the educated classes, had become more religious than that of his early manhood. But even at its best the tone of religious society was unlike his. For when left alone to himself he was a man absorbed in the thought of God. There is a saying of Boehme's which he loved to quote: "The element of the bird is the air, the element of the fish is the water, the element of the salamander is the fire, and the heart of God is Jacob Boehme's element." As I have heard him quote these words I used to think 'Thou art the man that Boehme describes himself to be.' What Mr. Alexander Scott is reputed to have said, many other hearts will respond to, that ever after he knew Mr. Erskine he never thought of God but the thought of Mr. Erskine was not far away. And combined with this went another tendency,—I mean the absolute conviction that all true thought about God would be found to harmonise with all that is truest and highest in the conscience and the affections of man. It was the desire himself to see and to make others see this harmony, to see that Christian doctrine was that which alone meets the cravings of heart and conscience, —it was this desire which animated him in all the books he wrote, and in all the many conversations he carried on.

Over the social circle that met within his home at Linlathen, his Christian influence showed itself in many

ways, and though differing according as it met with different characters, yet was always in harmony with itself. Among the many relatives of all ages and characters who visited him, and the guests who, especially during summer, were welcomed to Linlathen, there were of course those who could not sympathise with him in his deepest interests. If, however, they cared for literature, in Mr. Erskine they found one who was at home in all that was finest and most soul-like in literature, ancient and modern, and his bright and sympathetic remarks or questions drew out the stores even of the most reserved. The Classics he knew and loved to speak of, Shakespeare he knew only less well than the Bible, and his conversation was edged with many apt quotations from him. Even when sportsmen were his guests, men whose chief delights lay at Melton Mowbray, he found some bond of sympathy with them, something that made them take pleasure in his society. He had a wonderful art of setting every one at ease, and drawing out the best side of every character. In this, his own natural graciousness was perfectly seconded by his sister Mrs. Stirling, who so long presided as the lady of the house at Linlathen. She was of a character hardly less remarkable than her brother, like-minded with him in her aims and in the spirit she was of, but with more turn for the practical affairs of life. She stood, in a large measure, between Mr. Erskine and the buffets of the outward world, and allowed his life to flow on in its own natural current. How much her presence contributed to make Linlathen the well-ordered and happy home that it was can hardly be over-estimated. Never perhaps were brother and sister more fitted to each other, more able each to supply what the other had not, and so to make a home in which all the requirements of refined Christian society were combined. Very seldom has a home



which perfect ease, refinement, and high intelligence blended with the most sunny graciousness and overflowing Christian charity. No one, however great a stranger he might be when he entered that house, could there be a stranger long, and none of the many who visited Mr. Erskine and his sister there,—neighbours, high and low, guests from far and near,—will ever forget it. Another element was added to the family group by his sister Mrs. Paterson, who generally spent a great part of the summer at Linlathen. She was so much of an invalid that she could not come down-stairs regularly, but when she was able for this, or when visitors had an opportunity of conversing with her in private, they found in her an interest in things as keen and an intelligence as active as her brother's, combined with a spirit singularly gentle, attractive, and elevating. To one looking back on the Linlathen of those years, it seems to represent the very Scottish counterpart of that gentle and high-souled English family-group which is portrayed in the 'Memorials of a Quiet Life.'

I remember calling one summer afternoon at Mrs. Paterson's house in Morningside, about the year 1863 or 1864, I think. Mrs. Paterson, Mrs. Stirling, and her sister-in-law Mrs. James Erskine, were alone together in the drawing-room. For an hour I sat while they talked of the things nearest their own hearts and their brother's, in a natural yet most unworldly strain, such as conversation seldom attains. Mrs. Paterson perhaps spoke most, but all three took part. It was early summer, and the western sun was shedding a soft light along the green slopes of the Pentland hills, visible from the drawing-room window. When the hour was ended I came away, but a soothing sense remained long after, as though for a brief while I had been allowed to overhear a high pure strain of heavenly music. I felt that all three were, not by natural kinship only, but by

the kinship of the heart, spiritual sisters of their gifted brother.

With any of his guests at Linlathen who cared for it, Mr. Erskine used to continue his talk, not only in his library and along the corridor, but in walks about the place, or in a longer walk to the bare bleak links of Monifieth, where the outlook was on the eastern sea. A few of his sayings during such walks recur to me.

He said more than once that all the most deeply devout men he had known had been brought up as Calvinists. 'How then do you reconcile this fact with the life-long conflict you have maintained against Calvinism?' 'In this way,' he would reply; 'Calvinism makes God and the thought of Him all in all, and makes the creature almost as nothing before Him. So it engenders a deep reverence, a profound humility and self-abasement, which are the true beginnings of all religion. It exalts God infinitely above the creature. In this, Calvinism is true and great, and I honour it. What I cannot accept is its conception of God as One in whom power is the paramount attribute, to which a loving righteousness is made quite subordinate, and its restriction of the love of God in a way which seems to me not righteousness, but partiality.'

Another time, when speaking of how orthodoxy, correctness of intellectual belief, is made in Scotland the test and synonym of goodness, he used to tell of a gardener he had at Linlathen. The old man was, like many of his countrymen, a great theologian, and piqued himself on the correctness of his belief. One day, when speaking of the good men he had known, the gardener said, after enumerating several, 'And there was Mr. Campbell of the Row; he was a vara gude man, but than he devairged (diverged),' —as if after that there was no more to be said for him.

His relations to his neighbours at Linlathen of all classes were of the kindliest. I remember hearing of his having lost a number of his best Southdown ewes which were feeding in the park. The keeper watched, and found that the destroyer was a large Newfoundland dog, which he caught in the act. The dog belonged to a resident in the neighbouring town of Broughty-Ferry. The case went before the Sheriff, and the owner of the dog was condemned to pay to Mr. Erskine the value of all the ewes which had been destroyed. Some time afterwards Mr. Erskine was taken with compunction, as if he had been too hard on his neighbour; so he sent him from his own flock a present of fully as many ewes as had been paid for. One never heard how this act was regarded in the district, whether as the deed of unselfish kindness that it was, or as one of eccentricity and weakness.

In earlier days of his discipleship, when he and Mr. Campbell first saw a light in God's love which not many others then acknowledged, Mr. Erskine, as is well known, had for a time expounded, and even preached, to audiences more or less large, at Linlathen and elsewhere. He had, however, long ceased to do this when I first knew him. His voice was only heard in his morning reading of the Bible and in prayer with his own household in the library. The impression of him, as he conducted that simple worship, those who shared it will always remember. His daily walk, either in going or returning, often brought him to some cottage where a sick or aged person lay, and he would request his companion to remain for a little, while he went in to pay his friendly visit. Many records might have been gathered of persons around Linlathen, at Broughty-Ferry and elsewhere, who being in darkness and distress of mind, and finding no relief from the ministrations of the ordinary religious teachers, first found light

and peace from words spoken to them by Mr. Erskine. One can readily understand how this should be. It was not only that his large human sympathy, and his deep moral and spiritual hold of truth, fitted him to reach hearts that were in darkness. But it was because when he spoke to them of God and His love, he did not speak, as at second-hand, of something he had read in a book, but he witnessed directly to that which he had himself known and tried.

For the last ten or twelve years before Mrs. Stirling died, he generally took a house in Edinburgh, where they passed the months from January till May. This suited his social disposition, and gave him exactly that kind of society which he most relished. He thus was able to continue his intercourse with such of his early companions as still survived, with his cousin the scholarly Mr. George Dundas (afterwards Lord Manor), with Lord Rutherfurd, and with the aged Mr. James Mackenzie, son of 'the Man of Feeling.' In this way, too, he saw something of younger men, who were drawn to him by reverence and affection, and whom he welcomed with a sympathy at once fatherly and fraternal. Those winters in Edinburgh gave him, moreover, opportunities of seeing many relatives and friends not easily seen at other times, and each winter brought his two old and like-minded friends, Mr. Duncan of Parkhill and Mr. Campbell (of Row) to be his guests for a time. In his house in Edinburgh he used to exercise the same loving hospitality as at Linlathen. 'What is the end of all social gatherings of men?' some one asks, and answers, 'A little conversation, high, clear, and spiritual.' This result was attained, if ever, at the board where Mr. Erskine presided. He used to gather round his table small parties, seldom more than eight or ten, of persons well assorted, who would like to meet each other. Never were there more delightful evenings

pleasant humour, and thought flowed freely and naturally, and you came away feeling that the hours had passed, not only enjoyably, but profitably. Of a visit to Mr. Erskine in 1864, Mr. Campbell wrote:—'Mr. Erskine is so varied and full, passing so easily to what Professor Thomson, who dined with us yesterday, or Professor Rogers, who dined with us to-day, contribute from their special stores, drawing them out as an intelligent questioner does, and often by natural transition passing to what is higher.'

His forenoons were spent partly in writing letters; sometimes in giving more regular expression to his favourite thoughts; partly, also, in reading. His love of literature was intense, with a keen sense of what was most excellent. I have already noted his familiarity with Shakespeare, and how readily he drew on that great storehouse. If you went into his sitting-room on a forenoon during those years, you would probably find him engaged in reading some of the speeches of Thucydides, or a dialogue of Plato. His Greek was kept in continual exercise by the close study of the New Testament in the original. He used to say to me that he had such a thirst for learning, and admiration of it, that he believed he would have made himself a learned man, had it not been for the early failure of his eyesight. This confined his reading for some years to a quarter of an hour a day. What more he overtook was by the tedious process of listening to a reader. This inability to study cast him back on his own thoughts, and did much to foster that inwardness of mind which was natural to him.

During those winters his appearance, as he passed along Princes Street to and from his afternoon visit to the New Club, must have struck most passers-by,—with his broad hat or wideawake, and his quaint, antique, weather-fending guise. Walking with him on one such occasion, I observed that he stopped and spoke very cordially with a

distinguished ecclesiastical leader of the time, who was well known to disagree with him, and strongly to disapprove of his views. 'You seem very cordial with Dr. ——.' With a smile, he answered, 'He tries to cut me, but I never allow him. I always walk in before him, and make him shake hands.' On another occasion as I walked with him, we forgathered with Dr. John Brown, and we three stood talking together for some time. When Dr. Brown passed on, he said, 'I like him; he is a fine vernacular man; he can speak to you in a whisper. Have you ever observed it is only Scotchmen who can speak in a whisper? The English cannot do it.'

One Sunday he and I had been together to church, where a young divine preached a somewhat rambling, unconnected discourse. We came away, and said nothing. Some time afterwards, as we were walking in silence, he stopped, and looking round to me said, 'The educated mind desiderates a nexus,' and then, without any more, passed on.

These are small things, hardly worth repeating, but they are characteristic, and to those at least who knew him, may serve to recall, not only his tone of voice, but the quiet smile with which he used to say such things.

Among the last of the occasions on which he was allowed to receive his friends in Edinburgh was in the spring of 1866, when his old and much-valued friend Mr. Carlyle, after a long absence, revisited Edinburgh to be installed as Rector of the University. Many will still remember the wise and gracious courtesy with which he then performed the duties of hospitality, on the one hand securing for his guest the repose he needed and desired, on the other according to as many as possible the coveted privilege of meeting the sage of Chelsea. On the day on which Mr. Carlyle addressed the students in the large Music Hall, Mr. Erskine, knowing how great was the effort for a retired man



of Mr. Carlyle's years, and anxious how he might feel after it was over, had asked no one to dinner for that day. When the address was well achieved, and Mr. Erskine found that Mr. Carlyle was none the worse, but rather the better for the deliverance, he asked two or three of his intimate friends to come and join a quiet dinner-party. That evening Sir William Stirling Maxwell sat at the foot of the table, and with nice tact gave such turn to the conversation as allowed fullest scope to the sage who has praised silence so well, but fortunately does not practise it. Released from his burden, Mr. Carlyle was in excellent spirits, and discoursed in his most genial mood of his old Dumfriesshire remembrances, of the fate of James IV., and other matters of Scottish history, and of the then Emperor Napoleon, of whom, as may be imagined, he was no admirer. Those days when Mr. Erskine received Mr. Carlyle as his guest were among the last of his hospitalities in Edinburgh.

During the next winter his two sisters, first Mrs. Stirling, soon after Mrs. Paterson, who had been the chief earthly supports of his life, were removed, and his house was left to him desolate. The staff of family affection, on which he had so long leaned, was broken; the hand which for years had arranged all the outward framework of his life was withdrawn. All that was identified with his youth, all that 'his eye loved and his heart held converse with' from childhood, had now passed out of sight. 'He was as a man moving his goods into a far country, who at intervals and by portions sends them before him, till his present abode is wellnigh unfurnished. He had sent forward his friends on their journey, while he himself stayed behind, that there might be those in heaven to have thoughts of him, to look out for him, and receive him when his Lord should call.' These words, in which Dr. Newman describes the old age of St. John, truly represent Mr. Erskine during those last

years. Though he passed his few remaining winters in Edinburgh, yet he never again after Mrs. Stirling's death took a house there. In summers at Linlathen he used to say, 'As I go to bed at night I have to pass two empty rooms, which I never passed before without entering them.' Younger relatives gathered round him. His nephew and niece especially, who lived with him at Linlathen, did for him all that the most devoted and watchful love could do. But his own strength and health were declining, and there was an oppression about his heart, which at times was distressing. Still, during those last years he laboured on assiduously to complete a book which he had begun, when roused by a strong sense of the spiritual blindness betrayed in Renan's much-talked-of 'Vie de Jésus.' That book, notwithstanding all its outward grace of style and felicitous description, seemed to him at the core so short-sighted and misleading, that after a silence of more than thirty years he once more took his pen to say something in reply to it. He utterly repudiated the character which it drew of our Lord, and almost resented the fatuity which could separate with a sharp line the morality of the Gospels from their doctrinal teaching as to Christ Himself. He used to say, 'As you see in many English churches the Apostles' Creed placed on one side of the altar, on the other the Ten Commandments, so Renan would divide as with a knife the moral precepts of the Gospels from their doctrines. Those he would retain, these he would throw away. Can anything be more blind? As well might you expect the stem and leaves of a flower to flourish when you had cut away the root, as to retain the morality of the Gospels when you have discarded its doctrinal basis. Faith in Christ, and God in Christ, is the only root from which true Christian morality can grow.' This, or something like this, was what he used to say, and to bring this out fully in connection with



his other views of the inner and eternal relation of the Son to the Father, and of the Father to the Son, was a work which he desired to accomplish before the end. The whole line of thought which he wished to express stood out clear before his own mind to the last, but the physical labour of committing it to paper and arranging it was great, almost too great, for him. Yet he never ceased trying to put it into shape, and if he died without accomplishing all he wished to do, completed chapters were found sufficient to appear, after his death, in his last work, 'The Spiritual Order.'

The last visit which I remember having paid to him at Linlathen was on the sixth day of July, 1868,—a beautiful summer day. I had arrived there in the forenoon, and after lunch he asked me to take a drive with him. We drove to the manse of Mains, to make his first call on a young minister who had been recently placed there. Mains was a parish in which he had taken much interest, and which, chiefly through his influence, had enjoyed the benefit of a succession of unusually good ministers. Among those whom Mr. Erskine had helped to place there, and with whom he had afterwards lived in much intimacy, were the late Dr. John Robertson, afterwards of the Cathedral Church, Glasgow, and the Rev. John M'Murtrie, now minister of St. Bernard's, Edinburgh.[1]

It was a day of delightful sunshine, and as we drove to Mains the genial air seemed to touch the springs of old feeling and memory with him. He went back in retrospect to early companions,—the large cousinhood who used to meet at Airth and Kippendavie. He said how he loved the scenery of Stirlingshire and Perthshire, with the greenness and luxuriance of their woodland,—not without, I think, a silent mental contrast with the bare landscape and

[1] See Appendix No. V.

stunted timber of the eastern coast, in which his own lot had been cast. He said, if I remember right, that he had often had a dream of spending his last summers in those western regions which were so dear to him in memory.

After we had returned from our drive, we sat for some time on the lawn just over the Dighty Water, which ran underneath the bank on the top of which the house stands. It was about six o'clock P.M., and the sun was shining warm on us as we sat, and beautifying the landscape near and far. After talking for some time, he asked me if I remembered Mr. Standfast in the 'Pilgrim's Progress,' and his words when he came to the bank of the stream: 'The thoughts of what I am going to, and of the conduct that waits for me on the other side, doth lie as a glowing coal at my heart. . .' And then, looking across the Dighty to its farther bank, he added, 'I think that within a year from this I shall be on the other side.'

He then, I think, spoke of the awful silence of God, how it sometimes became oppressive, and the heart longed to hear, in answer to its cry, some audible voice. Then he quoted that word, 'Be not silent to me, O Lord: lest if Thou be silent to me, I become like them that go down into the pit;' and then I know he added, 'But it has not always been silence to me. I have had one revelation; it is now, I am sorry to say, a matter of memory with me. It was not a revelation of anything that was new to me. After it, I did not know anything which I did not know before. But it was a joy for which one might bear any sorrow,—"Joie, joie, pleurs de joie," as was the title of a tract I used to read at Geneva. I felt the power of love, that God is love, that He loved me, that He had spoken to me,'—and then, after a long pause,—'that He had broken silence to me.' As he spoke he touched me quickly on the arm, as if to indicate the direct impact from on high of



which he had been aware. As he walked away, leaning on my arm, round the west end of the house, towards the door he added: 'I know many persons in the other world, and I would like to see them again.' This was, as far as I remember, the last visit I paid him at Linlathen. The conversation I have just given was so remarkable that I made a note of it immediately, and I have given it as I wrote it down at the time.

During the next two winters (1868-69 and 1869-70) I saw him from time to time in Edinburgh.

One thing very remarkable during those last years must have struck all who conversed intimately with him,—his ever deepening sense of the evil of sin, and the personal way in which he took this home to himself. Small things done or said years ago would come back upon him and lie on his conscience, often painfully. Things which few other men would have ever thought of again, and which when told to others would seem trifling or harmless, were grievous to him in remembrance. 'I know that God has forgiven me for these things,' he would say, 'but I cannot forgive myself.' How far this burdened sense was connected with physical oppression about the heart no one can determine. He himself would have been among the last to accept the common explanation of spiritual malady by merely bodily causes. This, however, I believe, is true, that after that great effusion of blood, which was the prelude of the end, had relieved his heart, the rest was, as Mr. Campbell writing at the time expressed it, all peace,—love, with perfect clearness of mind. I was not privileged to see him during that solemn interval when he lay waiting for the end, and speaking words full of comfort and light to all those who were around him.

But his funeral day I remember well. It was a calm bright day of March. The funeral prayers of the English

Church were read in his own library, where he had so often prayed alone and in the family. He was laid beside his mother, and the brother he so revered, in Monifieth Churchyard, which is situated on the estuary of Tay, where it broadens out to meet the ocean. The churchyard was filled with his kindred, his friends, and his neighbours, and over that place and company there seemed to rest for the time a holy calm in harmony with the saintly spirit that had departed. The thoughts of others far away were centred in that churchyard on that day.

One who had in her childhood often listened to his voice, and had since then been long an invalid confined to her room,[1] breathed from her sickbed these touching words as she thought of that day. The image in the third verse especially all who knew him will understand.

ASLEEP.

MARCH 28TH, 1870.

Toss, ye wild waves
  Upon the shore,
He is at rest
  For evermore.

Moan o'er the surf,
  Thou wind so drear;
Moan, sob, and wail;
  He will not hear.

Close by he lies;
  But a long sleep,
His wondrous smile
  Enchained doth keep.

Roll, thou wild sea,
  Against the shore,
He is at rest
  For Evermore.

[1] Miss C. Noel, daughter of his old friend the Hon. and Rev. Gerard Noel.



APPENDIX.

No. I.—Page 66.

MR. ALEXANDER J. SCOTT.

In 1830 Mr. Scott became (vol. i. p. 138) minister of the small Scotch congregation at Woolwich. Here, in comparative retirement, immersed in studies of many kinds, he remained for upwards of fifteen years. His connection with Edward Irving at the first, and his residence so near the metropolis afterwards, brought him into close fellowship with Carlyle, Maurice, Hare, Dunn, etc., disclosing to them at once the rich resources of his scholarship and the peculiarities of a spiritual intelligence, the depth and width and height of which seemed equally above the ordinary range.

In 1841 Mr. Scott delivered in London a course of five lectures on "The Social Systems of the Present Day compared with Christianity." These lectures were reported in the *Pulpit*. They dealt with Romanism in the shape it then took of Puseyism, and which now, after an interval of thirty-six years, has reappeared in the guise of Ritualism; with Chartism in the shape it then took of demand for universal suffrage, annual Parliaments, and vote by ballot, and which now by kindly treatment and wise concession has almost disappeared; with Socialism in the shape it then took of Owenism, and which now, instead of disappearing, or being seen only among the lower and the more unenlightened, has in the portentous shapes of

Materialism, Secularism, Comtism, spread widely and taken hold of all classes of the community. The reader of Mr. Scott's lectures, as he reflects that more than the years of a generation have passed since their delivery, will be surprised that there is so little in them that is not as directly applicable to the present as to the past. They owe this to a quality by which all his handlings of such topics were distinguished,—that the merely temporary, secondary, adventitious was set aside, and in each case the root-principle was sought for, grasped, and alone dealt with. In the following year (1842) another but shorter course of lectures was delivered in the same place on "Schism," the same method observed, and with a like result. Three years later (1845) Mr. Scott preached a very original and remarkable sermon at Woolwich, on "The First Principles of Church Government." Its object was to show that, as represented in Holy Writ, this principle consists in the free exercise, on the part of the Church, at all different times, and in all different circumstances, of her own best judgment in the selection of the means best fitted to promote the great ends of her institution; that she has not been bound down to any specific form of government or worship or discipline by a divine enactment in its favour; that her institutions stand not on the strength of statute, but in that of their fitness to fulfil the great objects of her mission; that in point of fact the history of their origin proves this to be their character. The discourse consists mainly in a review of the first institution of Judges under Moses, of the schools of the Prophets and of the Synagogue in Old Testament times, and of the appointment of Deacons and the decisions of the first Council at Jerusalem in New Testament times, with the design of showing that what was in each case done, sprang naturally and primarily out of the form and

pressure of existing circumstances, did not originate in a divine edict, and though the sanction and blessing of God were conferred and bestowed, human wisdom, seeking such guidance as is always promised, was permitted to prompt and to fashion. The sermon was published as a pamphlet and came into the hands of Dr. Chalmers, who wrote thus to its author :—

"EDINBURGH, *March* 22, 1845.

"MY DEAR SIR,—Yours is no every-day pamphlet ; and I have read it with the most entire and cordial satisfaction. . . . How the adoption of your principle ought to speed the cause of Christian union ! . . .

"The saying of Paul that 'I speak as a man,' while it does not affect the plenary inspiration of Scripture, which is responsible not for the thing recorded but for the truth of it, teaches, in my opinion, your very lesson, by letting posterity know, from even his high example, that it was competent on mere human discretion to decide on questions of ecclesiastical regulations and polity. There is thus a great purpose served by that brief intimation, and it is a further enhancement of the lesson when he says, 'I speak as unto wise men, judge ye what I say.'—I am, my dear Sir, yours very truly, THOMAS CHALMERS."

In November 1848 Mr. Scott was appointed to the Chair of "English Language and Literature" in University College, London. In the year following (1849), on the invitation of the Directors of the Philosophical Institution of Edinburgh, he delivered in that city six lectures on "The Philosophy of History." In the winter of 1850-51 he was called to occupy the position of Principal of the new College (Owens) then founded at Manchester. In addition to the Principalship, he filled the Chairs of "Moral and Mental Philosophy" and of "English Language and



Literature." Again and again the Directors of the Philosophical Institution of Edinburgh sought and obtained his highly prized services as a lecturer. In 1850 he delivered before its members four lectures on "The existing Elements of English Society historically considered;" in 1851, four lectures on "The Progress of Mental Philosophy," and four lectures on "The General Literature of the Period." In 1853 he was asked by the Directors, as the greatest honour they could bestow, to deliver the Introductory Address to the course. In 1856 he delivered four lectures on "The Literature of the Middle Ages;" in 1858-59 four lectures on "The Revival of Letters anterior to the Reformation;" and in 1860 four lectures on "The Reformation in its Philosophical and Social Tendencies, and the Result."

The Principalship of Owens College Mr. Scott after some years resigned; but the Chairs held originally in connection with it he occupied till his death, which took place in January 1866, at Veytaux, on the Lake of Geneva, to which place failing health had taken him at the close of the summer session at Manchester in 1865.

As a linguist Mr. Scott had at free command, and turned to frequent exercise, the three old tongues of Hebrew, Greek, and Latin. His mastery of the three modern ones, French, Italian, and German, was complete. With the Anglo-Saxon he was so versant as to undertake to teach it. It was as instruments, however, that he used these languages, employing them as the needed keys to open up to him mediæval and modern literature and philosophy. The rich and varied stores thus gathered in were used again but as instruments or materials for that spiritual faculty of insight and reflection which in originality, subtlety, depth, and comprehensiveness was scarce surpassed by any pure thinker of his times. It is ever to

be regretted that he has left so little behind him. This was largely due to his possession of a singular facility of extempore address, and as singular an indisposition either to write or to publish. No matter what his topic,—whether recondite, involving sustained trains of purely abstract thought; or historical, involving numerous references to persons and events; or critical, involving the introduction of many apt illustrations,—in lecturing he never used a manuscript, seldom indeed had committed his thoughts to writing, and yet the stream of words flowed on unbroken,—words apparently all chosen with the nicest care and most delicate adaptation. "I have never," wrote Dr. W. B. Carpenter, "heard any public speaker who could be compared with him in masterly arrangement of materials, lucid method of exposition, ready choice of the most apposite language, freedom from all redundancy, force and vigour of expression, beauty and aptness of illustration,—in a word, in all those qualities which fix the attention of hearers." Could Mr. Scott have submitted to the labour of writing and publishing the thirty-one Edinburgh lectures alone, accompanied by illustrative notes, what a wide field would they cover, what a vast range of reading would they indicate, what profound remarks and delicate criticisms would they have presented to us! As it is, we have only notes of the four on the Literature of the Middle Ages, taken down by a shorthand writer, and published at Mr. Erskine's instance and expense. Urged by many friends, a year or two before his death, Mr. Scott put together and had printed three early papers from his pen, the lectures on Social System and Schism, and the sermon on Church Government. These, published by Macmillan and Co. after his decease, under the title "Discourses by Alexander J. Scott," are all the fruits that now remain of all the searchings after truth of a spirit so finely touched that

the two friends who knew him best, and who had each large acquaintance with distinguished men, have separately declared that he was the man above all others they had ever met who impressed them with the sense of mental and spiritual superiority.

No. II.—Page 281.

LETTER TO MR. AND MRS. MONEY.

It was in the beginning of the year 1827[1] that Mr. Erskine made the acquaintance of that "excellent and venerable father" who was then acting as British Consul-General at Venice. In Mr. Money and his family Mr. Erskine found a kindredship of spirit which created a bond of the closest kind, which expressed itself afterwards in a correspondence of the most affectionate character. It was matter of regret that Mr. Erskine's letters to them came too late for insertion at their proper dates in the first volume. One of them is inserted here because of its clear indication of the writer's doctrinal position at the time:—

TO MR. AND MRS. MONEY.

"Linlathen, Dundee, 23*d Jan.* 1829.

"My beloved Friends,—We have had a longer interval in correspondence, I think, now than ever we have had since our first acquaintance, but I have not ceased to love you or to think of you, and I doubt not of your thoughts and remembrances. About this time two years ago I was on the eve of quitting your hospitable house, after a long and delightful residence in it, for the more southern parts of Italy. Those days often recur to me—our trips to the

[1] See vol. i. pp. 92-99.

garden and the Lido, and our visits to the Patriarch, and our quiet friendly evenings. May the Lord Jehovah, the God of peace, bless you exceedingly, my dear brother and sister, and all your children, present with you or absent.

"I asked the favour of the General to convey to you a copy of a little work which I published last year on the Freeness of the Gospel, which I hope you received. I am aware that at Geneva our dear Malan takes a very different view of the subject, but in spite of his strong dissent, I feel more and more convinced that I have followed the Word of God in describing the Gospel. The Bible always charges man with being his own destroyer. It always charges man with resisting and refusing God's love, even when that love is entreating him to return: Rom. ii. 4, 5. The Bible declares that God's love embraces the whole human race, and that Christ is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world: John iii. 16, 17; 1 John ii. 2; 1 Tim. ii. 1-6; 2 Cor. v. 19, 20, 21. Are all then redeemed or purchased by Christ? Yes. What, are all saved? No, only those who believe: Mark xvi. 16. Are any then of those for whom Christ died lost at last? Yes, the Bible speaks of such: 2 Peter ii. 1. There we read of some who brought upon themselves swift destruction by denying the Lord who bought them. They were bought or redeemed by the Lord (for the words have the same meaning), and yet they brought on themselves swift destruction. And we read in the 10th chapter of Hebrews of those who have trodden under foot the Son of God, and have counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith they were sanctified, an unholy thing; they were sprinkled then with that atoning blood, and yet they perished. Why then does one man believe and another not? Faith is the operation of the electing grace of God. No man yields to the truth until he is compelled by this electing grace

of God. This is the proper place for election; faith is given through the channel of election. But the atonement is for all, and the invitation and command to believe in and to enjoy it is for all. When a man is condemned for unbelief, you cannot suppose that it is for not believing in God's love to others; assuredly it must be for disbelieving God's love to himself, for disbelieving that Christ died for him; and if he is condemned for disbelieving it, must it not have been indeed true that Christ did die for him, for otherwise it would not have been wrong in him to disbelieve it? So the Bible says to you and to me: 'God so loved thee as to give His Son to be a propitiation for thy sins.' I cannot see how one can arrive at a steady assurance on any other ground, for we cannot know our election except from marks in ourselves, and that is not the way of true assurance. Write to me about you all.

"Give my love to the General when you write, and to the Patriarch, and to our friend the Armenian.—Your affectionate and obliged friend and brother,

"T. ERSKINE.

"How is Charley getting on? I long to see you all again. I should not wonder if I take a run out among you. Pray write to me."

No. III.—PAGE 284.

LETTERS TO THE REV. THOMAS WRIGHT MATHEWS.

THE following letters throw light on the earlier phases of Mr. Erskine's religious belief:—

"LINLATHEN, *23d Jan.* 1829.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—Your letter has indeed been the subject of much thankfulness and rejoicing to me. God

has revealed Himself to you, and I trust that through you He will reveal Himself to many in Hamburgh. I am persuaded that until God is known as Love, He is not known at all, and that the distinctions between the holiness and the love of God are just devices of Satan to blind our eyes to God. Man's holiness is surely obedience to the law, and what is that law but love? and so also is God's holiness. The *election* is God's provision that the work of Christ shall not be without fruit in consequence of man's unbelief. When the Saviour complains, 'I have spent my strength for nought and in vain,' the Father assures Him that He *shall* see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied. But the love of God in the gospel of Christ is quite distinct in the Bible from the doctrine of election; and it must be so, in order to be a ground of confidence, for no man can read in the Bible that he is elected; and thus if the atonement ran in the channel of election no man could, in the Bible, read his interest in the atonement. But every man who knows himself to be *one of the whole world* reads in the Bible his own interest in that propitiation which was made for the whole world. Any confidence he may have in his election must arise from his possessing certain marks, *i.e.* it must arise from something within himself: 'God, I thank Thee that I am not as other men are, that I have faith,' etc. Whereas the confidence that he has in the atonement is a confidence in the truth of God's testimony to the world concerning His Son."

"LINLATHEN, DUNDEE, 28*th March* 1830.

"MY DEAR BROTHER IN THE LORD,—You say that you have been experiencing what the preachers of the Cross have always been experiencing, and must look for until the second coming of the Lord. The Lord strengthen you and stand by you, and cause your heart to know that He

is for you, and that He is more than all that can be against you. You have been hearing various reports about me also. My dear brother, I regard the Divinity, the true Deity of Jesus Christ, to be that one great master truth which contains and sums up all other truths revealed by our God concerning Himself. Blessed be God, I am no Socinian. With regard to the imputation of Christ's righteousness I think that there has been a great deal of error spoken. According to the received systems of men, Christ is regarded as a veil or screen between God and believers, through which veil they look upon God as something different from what He is in reality, for the burning rays of His holiness and justice are conceived to be quenched or mitigated in passing through Christ, so that Christ is not supposed to declare the Father as He is, or to manifest His true character. Now this is nothing better than to suppose that the Gospel has introduced a fiction into the relation between God and the sinful creature. But this is impossible. Then again, as none but believers have this robe of righteousness, and as none but those who have this robe are regarded with forgiving love by God, it follows that a man must first be a believer before he is loved or forgiven, which involves us in the general perplexity as to what the gospel is, which darkens all the received systems of theology. Faith in this way is necessarily made a work, because it is made a stepping-stone to the love and forgiveness of God, and not a recognition of that love and forgiveness already bestowed, which most assuredly it is. Well, but you ask what I make of the expressions in Scripture on this subject. I was at first, when thinking on this subject, struck with the fact, that throughout the whole Gospel and Epistles of John there was no mention of such a thing as the imputation of Christ's righteousness. Now, as I was convinced that the

whole of divine truth was really contained in John's writings, I was led to conclude that this imputation of righteousness must either be discoverable in them under some other name, or else that those parts of Scripture in which this doctrine appears must have been misunderstood. Moreover, on examining the passages where the imputation of righteousness appears most prominent, I observed that it was not the righteousness of Christ, but the righteousness of God. Thus Rom. i. 17; Rom. iii. 21-26; Rom. x. 3. It is often called the righteousness of faith, but never the righteousness of Christ.

"Now what is the righteousness of God?

"It appears to be the same thing as the name of God. In the parallel verses of Psalms xxii. and xl. the name and the righteousness are used indifferently, and in Psalm lxxxix. verse 16 also. And Jesus in the end of 17th John says, 'I have declared unto them Thy name, and will declare it, in order that the love wherewith Thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.' Well, what is the name of God? That which was revealed to Moses, Exodus xxxiv. 6,—*Forgiving iniquity; without clearing it.* These two parts constitute the name of God, which Jesus declared, by being God's gift of love to the world, and by tasting death for every man,—to condemn and put away the sin of every man. And this also is the righteousness of God; it is the declaration that God has forgiven the sinner because He has condemned the sin, in Jesus who tasted death for every man. Now just compare these three passages: John iii. 16, John xvii. 26, Rom. i. 16, 17. In the first we are told that whosoever believeth in Christ as God's gift of love to the world hath everlasting life; in the second we are told that those who know the name of God as declared by Christ have the love of God and the Christ of God dwelling in them; and in the third we

are told that those who believe in the righteousness of God, as revealed in the gospel, have salvation. Now I believe that these three passages mean the same thing precisely. I believe that God's gift of love to the world, and the name of God, and the righteousness of God, are one thing; and that everlasting life, and the love of God dwelling in a man, and salvation, are also one thing. Everlasting life is the very life which is in God, the very character of God, infused into man, 1 John i., and the love of God is the same thing, for God is love; and salvation is becoming the habitation of God through the Spirit, and this is all to be had simply by believing in God's character as revealed in Christ. Now the righteousness of God is just the character of God as revealed in Christ, and this righteousness is to be had by believing God's character as revealed in Christ, and thus the creature that believes in this righteousness of God is in the right state of the creature. The only way to get natural light is to open the eyes and let in the light. That is the right state of the creature, because when its eyes are open it admits the light, and the only way for a sinful creature to get righteousness is to open the mind's eye (faith) to let in the righteousness of God. This is the only way, for there is no other righteousness than God's, and this righteousness is unto all (whether they believe it or not, as light is unto a man whether he opens his eyes or not), and upon all that believe; it is therefore only through faith that this righteousness is to enter. The word 'imputed' should be rendered 'reckoned' or 'accounted.' God reckons the man righteous who believes in sin condemned and forgiven through the blood of Christ, that is, God reckons him in his right state. He had reckoned him in a wrong state whilst he did not believe this, but now he is right, and he is right according to the reckoning of God, who reckons things as they truly

are. Man reckons many things righteous, viz., acts of social duty, or of religious duty, or pilgrimages, or reformations and amendments, but God's judgment is that the creature is then only righteous or in its right state when it recognises the righteousness of God. For thus that righteousness enters in, and man becomes partaker of the divine nature according to God's purpose of love regarding him.

"This righteousness is no fiction, no case, no one-side thing; it is the same thing as the life of God and the love of God spoken of in the other scriptures, and especially in John, as entering into a man and abiding in him. God does not love the world for the sake of Christ. It was His love to the world that gave Christ; but as Christ is the gift of God's love, so He is also the channel through which that love flows. God's love could not hold fellowship with a sinner, without at the same time bearing witness to the desert of sin, both in misery and disapprobation. Till this testimony was borne, the love, however strong, could not come forth; the sin repelled it. But in Christ that testimony was borne, and through Christ now may flow all the blessings of God freely upon the sinner, without stain to the holiness or justice of God. But all men are placed in this condition, whether they believe it or not. As far as this can be called imputation of Christ's righteousness, it is a universal thing. But those only who believe it are in a right state. They only are righteous. This is evidently the meaning of the word in the Psalms, 'They that know Thy name will put their trust in Thee,' Ps. ix. 10, compared with Proverbs xviii. 10, and Ps. xxxii. Read the two last verses carefully as referring to the beginning of the Psalm. To sum the whole matter: 'This is life eternal, to know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent.'—Beloved friends, farewell,

Yours affectionately, T. ERSKINE.

"Remember that you have a home with us, whilst gives us a home."

"LINLATHEN, 18*th January* 1

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—I have read over Mr. J sermon and criticism on your pamphlet. I wish he u stood that doctrine which he condemns. I wish he u stood the meaning of the conversation in Simon's recorded in the 7th chapter of Luke, and then I am he would forgive inaccuracies of expression, and join you in thanking God that there is really something i relation of sinners to God that would make their h to rejoice if they knew it. But I think Mr. Jones v admit that the gospel is a manifestation of God v would produce joy without the accompaniment of self-reflection, 'I believe.' If a man is to get a ble for believing a thing, as a reward for believing a t then the thing itself need not be a matter of joy; bu Jones knows well that the gospel is itself glad ti which are neither made gladder nor truer by being beli but yet can make no heart glad until that heart k them to be true. I remember Mr. Cooke of Belfast a criticism on my 'Essay on Faith,' and he seemed t that he had sufficiently refuted my view of the matt showing that faith throughout the Bible meant r trust than belief, not considering that the trust could be derived from the belief of something in God v could produce trust. Now what could produce in heart of a conscious sinner trust toward God, a j trust? for those who heard and believed the g rejoiced immediately. If the forgiveness itself depe on his rightly believing the gospel, how could a rejoice immediately on his hearing it? 'When they nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both.' And not 'both' there mean all,—both those who felt thems

to be sinners and those who did not,—both Simon and the woman? I cannot understand how a man can ever feel quite assured that he is forgiven unless that forgiveness is contained in the message of the gospel. 'Through this Man is declared unto you the forgiveness of sins.' And until a man has this assurance, is not his obedience like that of a son who knows that his name has been erased from his father's will and who desires to have it reinserted? I would not insist on the terms. I should be satisfied with the belief that God is a loving, righteous Father, whose object in creating man was that he might be partaker of the Divine holiness and the Divine blessedness, and who acts on that same purpose in all His dealings with man, and that Christ came into the world to declare and accomplish this purpose. The putting away of sin has surely a deeper meaning, a more subjective meaning, than pardon; but pardon is God's commencement of it, though pardon is not salvation."

"LINLATHEN, 19*th August* 1854.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—I think your argument against the distinction between God as a Father and God as a Governor very satisfactorily conducted. Mr. Jones does not really understand how closely love and anger may be related, how necessarily in some cases, so that the cessation of anger would imply the cessation of love. It is clear also that it is the person, not the impersonality, which is angry. I sympathise with Mr. Syme's feeling of difficulty as to the definition of pardon. I am persuaded that the fundamental idea contained in the expression *ἄφεσις τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν* is deliverance from sin, this being evidently the mind and purpose of God towards men in relation to sin. But we want something else. Take the conclusion of the 7th chapter of Luke, in which our Lord explains to Simon the relative spiritual condition of himself and the

woman, by the parable of the creditor who had two debtors, the one owing five hundred pence, the other fifty. It is said that when they had nothing to pay he frankly forgave them both. This was generous love on the part of the creditor, and the debtor, who believed the love, loved in return. Faith in the love produced love, and love, being salvation, salvation and faith saved her. Now this forgiveness on the part of the creditor was irrespective of the actual condition of the debtor's mind altogether, and illustrates the mind of God towards our whole race. This was the forgiveness of sin which was preached at Row, and at Antioch, in Acts xiii. 38, and the meaning of it seems to be, that there is a loving desire in the heart of God towards every man, that he should turn from all sin and become righteous. As soon as I know this, and also know something of the value of righteousness, I immediately feel myself in God's hands, and I say, 'Search me, O Lord, and use all means that to Thee seem good for the accomplishment of Thy blessed desire towards me.' As soon as I have this feeling, although I am conscious of weakness that will probably lead to falls, yet I know and feel myself to be of one mind with my Father, and therefore embraced within His forgiving smile. Still, however, when I do fall I feel that I have grieved my Father, and provoked His displeasure, and then there is fresh need of forgiveness and fresh granting of it. I look to Him for it, and yield to His will. First then there is an outer circle of forgiveness embracing the whole world, which is no other than the desire of God that all men should be righteous. Then there is a forgiveness (of sympathy or of approbation) towards those who know their Father and abhor their sin and accept their punishment, both containing the fundamental idea of the annihilation of sin. But we cannot fall out of the first. We can fall out of the second. Let none,

however, rest here, for nothing I should conceive to be so hardening to the heart as being content to fall out of the second in the confidence of being embraced in the first. My dear friend, this is very lame, but I give it to you as I have it in me. I think that the *nasa* of the Hebrews means the removal of sin, as in the great name of Jehovah in Deuteronomy: 'The Lord God, merciful and gracious, forgiving (removing) iniquity, transgression, and sin, without clearing the guilty.' The mercy is consistent with punishing the guilty, because it is for 'correction, not for destruction.' I desire for you that you may be guided to write wisely and well, to the edifying and comforting of many hearts. All here join in this desire."

No. IV.—Page 316.

WRITINGS OF MR. ERSKINE.

Ten years or so after the publication of the "Doctrine of Election," two distinguished Americans called upon Mr. Erskine, giving as their apology for intruding without introduction, their strong desire to become personally acquainted with an author whose writings had made a wide and deep impression on their countrymen. "It is strange," said Mr. Erskine; "it is a long time since I have read any of them, and my impression is that if I did, I would dislike them." His interviewers named one of his volumes as to which they fancied he could have no such feeling. "My impression is," was the reply, "that that is the one that I would particularly dislike." Cherishing for a time this feeling, Mr. Erskine suffered his earlier publications to go out of print. In 1844, Mr. Wright Mathews having written to him suggesting that the "Introductory Essay" to the little volume of "Letters by a Lady" should

be reprinted, and offering, if the liberty were given to republish it, to superintend the press, received the following reply:—

"St. George's Hotel, *26th Sept.* 1844.

"I don't wish to oppose your desire to have that little Essay reprinted, and yet I know that I could not put my seal to it as I could have done when it was written, and I do not like to put anything forth as the Gospel, which contains so imperfect a view of truth as that little essay does. You could make a much better tract than that, and if so, why publish an inferior and defective tract?

"I hope yet, if God spare me, to write some short statement which may contain all the truth which I have published, and omit the trash. Let this be my answer, dear friends, to your proposition."

Discouragement only led Mr. Mathews to renew and enlarge his offer, and he got in return a *carte-blanche*, upon which he never acted:—

"Paris, *8th October* 1844.

"You are very welcome to do what you please with my books, only don't touch much on the last, which I hope yet to put into a better form, and perhaps to make it into a *résumé* of all that is valuable in the former ones, particularly the conclusion. In the introduction to the old lady's letters I remember some severe words about the leprosy of the Church of Scotland, which ought to be omitted as hurting without healing. It is long since I have read any of them. I cannot do it, there are so many things which are stated there as whole truths, which are only half truths. This is my general fault to them."

Under the title "True and False Religion," the "Introductory Essay" alluded to in the first of these letters, was re-issued in 1874, by the incumbent of Glenfield, Leicester-

shire, and it is gratifying to observe that the passage pointed to by Mr. Erskine as the one he would not like to see reprinted has been, of his own motion, omitted by the judicious editor.

The conclusion of the volume on Election, referred to in the second letter to Mr. Mathews, was also separately republished, by one who thoroughly appreciated its place and importance among Mr. Erskine's writings, under the title, "The Internal Word; or, Light becoming Life; a Short Guide to the Rule of Faith and of Life; being an Abridgment of the concluding portion of Mr. Erskine's volume on the Doctrine of Election. Edited by the Right Rev. the Bishop of Argyll. Edinburgh, 1865."

The indisposition to authorship cherished so long was at last dispelled. The publication successively of the "Essays and Reviews," Renan's "Life of Jesus," "Ecce Homo," and Colenso on the "Pentateuch," awakened in him profound anxiety and not a little alarm. It was not in the direction taken by the writers of those volumes that he felt inclined to move. It was not from movement in that direction that he anticipated the truest and best advance. Apostle of progress in religious thought as he had proved himself to be, depth was to him far more than width. It was a broadening which should do nothing to weaken or dilute the faith that he aimed at and desired. There was much in the fresh historic criticism brought to bear upon the narrative of the Bible with which he was inclined to sympathise, but whenever he detected a disposition to set aside or make light of the great truths of the Incarnation of the Deity in the person of Jesus Christ, and the new relation of sonship to God into which the world has been begotten by His life and death, he drew back and repudiated. When the great truths or laws revealed in the central facts of Christianity were in

any way unsettled, it was not, in Mr. Erskine's opinion, by Biblical criticism that the unsettling process was best met, but by a fresh or still further unfolding of their grounds and reasons in the character of God and the constitution of human nature. In this region he felt that he had a word to say of moment to the times; he set himself to say it too in such a manner as might address itself pertinently and with power even to those who entirely repudiated the inspiration and the supernatural in the facts and records of the Bible. The letters from 1864 onwards tell with what difficulties he had to contend in trying to give fit expression to his latest thoughts. And they sufficiently indicate what these thoughts were which he had yet but imperfectly embodied when he was removed by death. His dying charge to Miss Gourlay was most faithfully and intelligently executed. All that was in a fit state for publication was carefully seen through the press, and published in 1871 under the title, "The Spiritual Order and other Papers, selected from the Manuscripts of the late Thomas Erskine of Linlathen," whilst the specific instruction as to the paper on Education and Probation (see *ante*, p. 339) was carried out by its separate publication in 1870 under the title, "The Purpose of God."[1]

With the removal of the indisposition to prepare anything new for publication, there came also the removal of the impression that his earlier writings were in anything like dissonance with his later ideas. Yielding to repeated solicitation, he consented to listen to his volume on the "Unconditional Freeness of the Gospel," as read to him by friends, and being satisfied that it was in substantial harmony with what he was then preparing for the press, consented to its republication. It appeared in 1870, soon after his death, and a new edition was issued in 1873.

[1] It appears as the third chapter of *The Spiritual Order*.

No. V.—PAGE 376.

LETTER ON SELECTING A MINISTER.

WHEN unable to take the same active part in the appointment of a minister that he had done in the cases of Dr. Robertson and Mr. M'Murtrie, Mr. Erskine addressed the following letter to the Committee appointed to select:—

"LINLATHEN, 20*th Nov.* 1865.

"DEAR SIR,—It appears to me, as I have no doubt it appears to all the members of the Committee, that persons selected for such a purpose as that of choosing the man who may perhaps be the spiritual guide of the parish for half a century, are called on most carefully to consider the reasons which should govern their choice.

"By his very position that man must exercise a very important influence on all the people, both as regards their theology and their general character and social life; and this influence will either be for good or evil, according as he is or is not himself a really earnest and devoted man, feeling the unspeakable importance of the charge committed to him, and the grave responsibility which he has taken on himself by accepting it—a responsibility both to God and man. Earnestness and devotedness, then, true piety, love to God, and love to man, are the first requisites, without which no gifts however shining are to have any weight with us.

"Our first question is not to be, Is he a talented man? or, Is he a great orator? but, Is he a good man, an earnest man, an affectionate man? Will he be a comfort at the side of a sick-bed? Will he go as a friend and brother into the houses of the poor? Will he endeavour not only

to walk humbly and meekly himself, but will he endeavour to be a peacemaker through the parish?

"But having assured ourselves of his personal godliness and worth, we must also desire that he should be capable of communicating to others what he has learned for himself of the will of God, in such a manner as to arrest their conscience and convince their understanding. As to the subject of his teaching, it seems to me that his great aim ought to be to awaken in the minds of his hearers real earnest thought as to the meaning of their own existence. What is God's purpose in giving us existence? The Christian Revelation is the discovery of this purpose. Its great announcement is, that God is a Father, and that the purpose of His love, through all His dealings with us, outward and inward, is to train and educate us, as His children, into a participation of His own character, and thus to make us sharers in His own blessedness.

"This education can in no other way be carried on but by a real recognition of this loving purpose in all things; for though outward obedience may be yielded from interested motives, the obedience of the heart, which alone can satisfy a father, cannot be rendered but by love. The great object of the preacher therefore is to show love dominant in all God's dealings with men. And this he will do when he truly preaches Jesus Christ, God's unspeakable gift, in whom is revealed not only the extent of the Father's love, but also the filial character which that love desires to call forth in man. T. ERSKINE."



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